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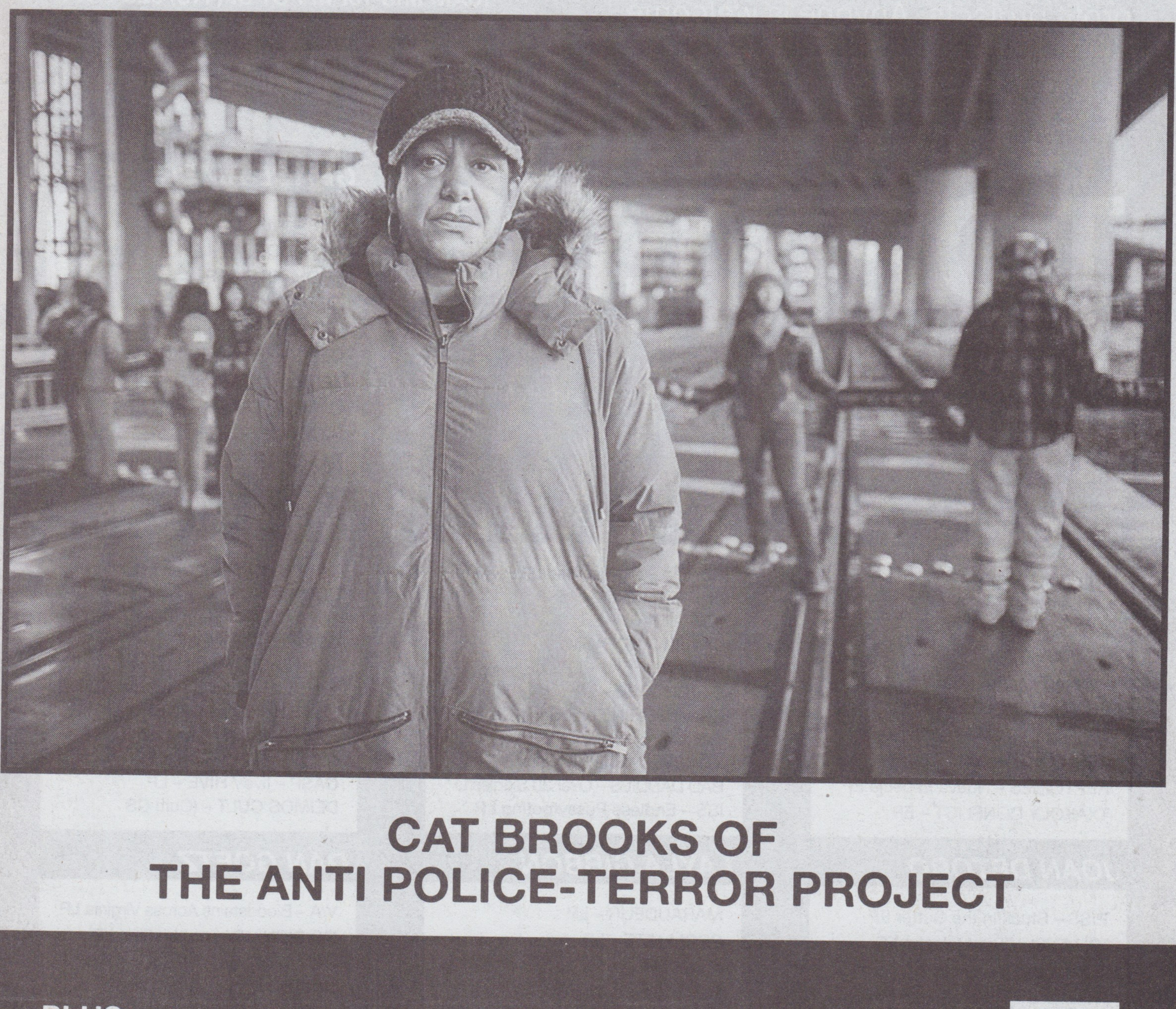

CAT BROOKS OF THE ANTI POLICE-TERROR PROJECT

PLUS:

GRIT NEGATIV NO. SHEFFIELD SCENE REPORT
COMMUNITY STRESSHOLD WILLIE ALEXANDER
ALABAMA PUNK HISTORY PART TWO FRED “FREAK” SMITH

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TOP TENS

Some of our contributors' top ten (or so) things we've reviewed this month. For review consideration, send two copies of vinyl, or one copy of CD-only or demo releases to our PO Box. We review independent punk, garage, and hardcore releases—no major labels!

GRACE AMBROSE

- GSP – live
- MARAUDEUR – LP
- PROM NITE – LP
- HEAVY METAL – LP2
- REPTOIDES – Nueva Especie EP
- DEBILS – LP / THE NORMALS – EP
- ZELLOTS – On the Dole flexi
- C.H.E.W. / RASH – split EP
- SICK HORSE – LP
- RIK & THE PIGS – live

MATT BADENHOP

- SALTY – Preservation Blues CS
- INVESTMENT – Empty Stations CS
- THE NORMALS – EP
- HEAVY METAL – LP2 LP
- 'O' LEVEL - The Malcolm EP
- PROM NITE – LP
- ZELLOTS – On The Dole Flexi
- RC BOYS – Rad Conspiracy EP
- REPTOIDES – Nueva Especie EP
- TXÄKOLY CONFLICT – EP

MITCH CARDWELL

- OBNOX – Murder Radio LP
- RUBBER MATE – 45
- GSP – live
- DAVID NANCE – live
- HEAVY METAL – LP2 LP
- SICK HORSE – LP
- CRIMPSHRINE – 7 Song Demo + Berkeley Sampler LP
- 'O' LEVEL - The Malcolm EP
- BAD DADDIES – Over 30 Singles LP
- ISS – Endless Pussyfooting LP

ROBERT COLLINS

- CARTOUCHE – A Venir CD
- HUMILIATION – Laughing Wall EP
- CØNDITIØN – Subjugated Fate EP
- COMPLETERS – CS
- ROUND EYE – Monster Vision LP
- ENZYME – Piss On Authority EP
- SISTEMA EN DECADENCIA – EP
- NASTI – Big Achievements LP
- NEURA – CS / PISS – EP
- GASP – live / HIVE – LP
- DEIMOS CULT – (Cult) CS

JOAN DETORO

- PISS – Stuck in the Gutter EP
- 'O' LEVEL - The Malcolm EP
- RASHOMON – Demo 2017 EP
- RC BOYS – Rad Conspiracy EP
- GSP – live
- REPTOIDES – Nueva Especie EP
- HEAVY METAL – LP2 LP
- PROM NITE – LP
- JUDY AND THE JERKS – CS
- EYE JAMMY – CS

LAYLA GIBBON

- MARAUDEUR – LP
- PROM NITE – LP
- LITHICS – live
- REPTOIDES – Nueva Especie EP
- ZELLOTS – On The Dole flexi
- DAISY WORLD – live
- HEAVY METAL – LP2 LP
- RC BOYS – Rad Conspiracy EP
- SICK HORSE – LP
- DEBILS – LP

DAN GOETZ

- V/A – Bloodstains Across Virginia LP
- NO SKIN – Paying the Fine LP
- DARK / LIGHT – Kill Some Time LP
- HEAVY METAL – LP2 LP
- ISS – Endless Pussyfooting LP
- OBNOX – Murder Radio LP
- GESTURES – Shattered Mind EP
- RC BOYS – Rad Conspiracy EP
- C.H.E.W. / RASH – split EP
- REPTOIDES – Nueva Especie EP

GREG HARVESTER

- JOHN HOFFMAN – CS
- PALPOM – 45
- DARK / LIGHT – LP
- EYE JAMMY – CS
- JUDY AND THE JERKS – CS
- MELANIN – CS
- BAD DADDIES – Over 30 Singles LP
- IRON LUNG / SMOKERS – live
- TENEMENT – live
- HATE FILLED KIDS – CS

KENNY KAOS

- CHANNEL 3 – Put 'Em Up LP
- BAD DADDIES – Over 30 Singles LP
- THE NORMALS – EP
- 'O' LEVEL - The Malcolm EP
- ELLEN & THE DEGENERATES – EP
- STARTER JACKETS – EP
- JACK & THE RIPPERS – 45 + CS
- CATS AND THE UNDERDOGS – EP
- CAT PARTY – Rest In Post LP
- WOOLLY BUSHMEN – LP

CAROLYN KEDDY

- GESTURES – Shattered Mind EP
- HEAVY METAL – LP2 LP
- ISS – Endless Pussyfooting LP
- DANCER – 45
- MARAUDEUR – LP
- PAMPLEMOUSSE – CD
- DEBILS – LP
- JACK – Armee And Fuck-Off EP
- BAD DADDIES – Over 30 Singles LP
- FEEDTIME – live

RAY LUJAN

- CATS AND THE UNDERDOGS – EP
- CHANNEL 3 – Put 'Em Up LP
- CITY MOUSE – Get Right LP
- MARAUDEUR – LP
- P.R.O.B.L.E.M.S. – LP
- STARTER JACKETS – EP
- TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET – 45
- THE VIBRATORS – Restless CD
- WEEKEND DADS – EP
- WOOLEN MEN – Lucky Box LP

MARISSA MAGIC

She is like an art object....

ROTTEN RON READY

- PISS – Stuck in the Gutter EP
- REPTOIDES – Nueva Especie EP
- RUBBER MATE – 45
- CØNDITIØN – Subjugated Fate EP
- ENZYME – Piss On Authority EP
- HEAVY METAL – LP2 LP
- SISTEMA EN DECADENCIA – EP
- DIVA CUP / SHORT ORDER – split EP
- SICK HORSE – LP
- RC BOYS – Rad Conspiracy EP

FRED SCHRUNK

- BAD DADDIES – Over 30 Singles LP
- CRIMPSHRINE – all LPs
- C.H.E.W. / RASH – split EP
- PROM NITE – LP
- RUBBER MATE – 45
- BAD LUCK – "Le Motard" 45
- DEBILS – LP
- SICK HORSE – LP
- DARK / LIGHT – LP
- RC BOYS – Rad Conspiracy EP

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Wanna be a shitworker? Write mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

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ISSUE #415

Disguise at Noise Annoys Festival. Photo: Oliver Parker

FRONT COVER: Cat Brooks, by Brooke Anderson photography.

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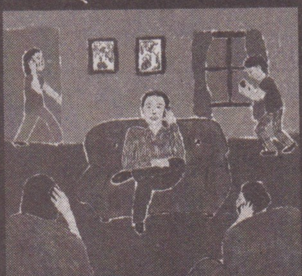

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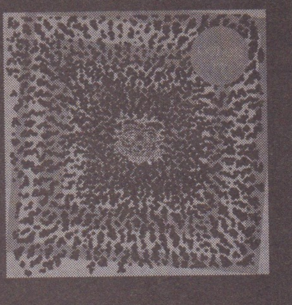

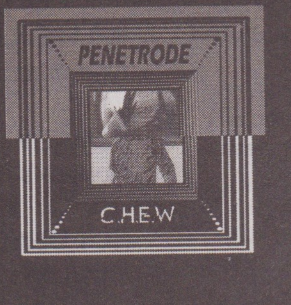

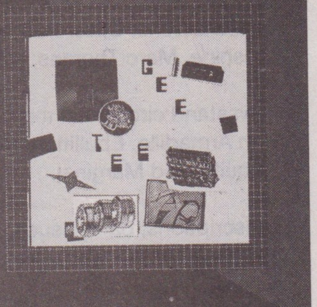

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LETTERS

Send letters to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. Letters may be edited for length. Response not guaranteed.

Very sad to read your review on one the UK's finest UK82 bands' latest EP. In fact you have been hammering the old school of late, is there a reason why for this? Without them where would the scene genuinely be?

Why give bad press to bands who have given so much for years like GBH, the Exploited (at times) and now Picture Frame Seduction. Pretty poor show guys, and Gregg should hold his head in shame. I'm only pissed because it's becoming more and more of an issue. I realize these bands are old-ish, I wasn't even born in 1982 but surely with that comes some respect, it's not even as if recent bad reviews have been bad records. The latest PFS is seriously good.

What's the agenda?

—Dave Boy Green

I want to start this off by saying that you are right about one thing. You think that the record is "seriously good" and you are correct because that is your opinion. I don't think that the record is good and I'm also right because that is my opinion. This is a magazine based on bands sending their record in and receiving someone's opinion about it. Within my review, I didn't even really slam it. I just said it packs no punch. I listened to it again to see if I was being unnecessarily harsh, but I honestly lost interest and forgot it was even playing before the first song was finished.

"Why give bad press to bands who have given so much for years?" Like the Exploited? You mean the band with the singer with a swastika tattoo and national front sympathies? Curious. I don't think that a band can just put out an amazing album and expect to sail off that for the next 40 years. I absolutely love that first Zero Boys LP, but it doesn't stop me from being critical of their later efforts and realizing that their 2014 LP is utter garbage.

Yes, I have personally been "hammering the old school" as of late (while many reissues have been getting nothing but glowing reviews within these pages) and that's because I keep hearing records by bands who are getting back together twenty years after their teenage fury has subsided only to make tepid music under the same name. I don't think it's bad or wrong to keep making music into old age (I was born before 1982), but start a new band. Don't try to latch onto the past that you've already passed through.

Also, that record cover still sucks.

Holding my head high,
Greg(g) Harvester

Greetings Maxirockers,

If you are interested in making your band's music available to prisoners please keep reading. In June of this year prisoners in South Dakota were provided tablets which provide various services including music streaming. Global Tel Link is the company which provides the tablets and the streaming services. GTL is also a phone service provider in most state prison systems so I assume the music streaming app is available in other states.

I'm not a fan of music streaming apps, but given my situation I am pretty stoked to be able to listen to good tunes. Of course I was quite skeptical of what kind of music content would be included on the app, but to my surprise it is actually pretty good. The app is comparable to other music streaming apps with over twelve million songs on it.

Since I don't own the tablet, no music is downloaded. But I am allowed to create an online music library and I currently have over 900 albums in my "collection." Over 800 of these albums are DIY releases and more than 200 of them are "new to me" bands I referenced from *MRR* columns and record reviews. The selection of DIY punk is pretty impressive! And as much as I enjoy the often scathing and humorous sarcasm in record reviews by Rotten Ron, it is so much better to me to research and listen to the bands on this streaming app. It's been awhile since I've had this "luxury!"

In the time leading up to and during the writing of this letter I have listened to full albums from the following bands: Nomads, Boom Boom Kid, Potty Mouth, Slang, the Wellies, Nip Drivers, Neighborhood Brats, and Weekend Nachos. And of course most of the original wave of punk bands are available as well as political commentary from the likes of Noam Chomsky, Angela Davis, Fred Hampton, and Howard Zinn (plus many more).

I have no idea of how a band puts their music on a streaming app, but I assume you simply have to contact GTL Music or do a little web research. Hopefully, more bands will be willing to make their music available to prisoners.

In closing, I thank *MRR* for printing this and I also welcome correspondence from any and all.

Sincerely,
Bryan Iverson
#21352
RCCWC
2725 Creek Drive Suite 100
Rapid City, South Dakota 57703

Make your music accessible to prisoners! Contact GTL through gtl.net.

Living in the wasteland of Oxford, Mississippi, punk is almost nonexistent to the naked eye. Who's to blame when it has pretty much been isolated to nothing more than a mere thought in this small town? I have been living here for four years now and have always tried to make punk something in this town (and still do), but I have always been shut down by either venues, houses, people, etc. It makes me wonder if punk could ever be a thing here again? It has the people, it has the spaces for bands to play, and it has tons of talent that could help bring punk music back to Oxford. It could happen again. Oxford used to have a pretty big punk scene back in the '90s with bands like the Cooters, the Neckbones, etc. with a few punk venues, and being the home for some of the founders of the punk zine Profane Existence. But somehow it all just disappeared and was slowly ostracized from the town.

Since Oxford has been such a wasteland to punk over the years, for the last six years I have been traveling to Memphis punk shows, what is left of Jackson punk shows, and Hattiesburg punk shows, all being at least an hour or more away. For these six years I have always wanted to move to Hattiesburg due to the booming punk scene it has there along with almost all of my slamily (minus a few that live in Jackson) that are some of the best people that have ever come into my life. But duty calls and I am in Oxford for the rest of the year. I'm going to continue to do my job by bringing punk to Oxford even if it means spending all of my money on gas and giving up on sleep when I travel. It recently came to mind though that having punk shows in Oxford might not be a very possible thing, but what I can do to contribute punk to Oxford in the meantime is introduce people that have never heard of, or are interested in punk to shows. To introduce punk to these people, I have been filling my car up with new faces over the course of the last year to bring down to Jackson, Hattiesburg, Memphis, or wherever else the punk is slamming at. I have had mixed reactions, but overall I have had some people that have fallen in love with punk and always ask me when the next show is coming up, which is really cool! I guess my goal in Oxford has been to introduce the punk mentality, DIY attitude, and everything it entails to hope that more and more people in Oxford are introduced to punk in Mississippi / in general and that more and more people in Oxford have that punk mindset to help make this not so great place a better place.

In the meantime, I have been able to start a punk band in Oxford named Slurp, which is comprised of me and two other friends who decided to book a show in Hattiesburg without any music two weeks before the show and wrote an entire EP and ended up falling in love with what it came to be. Since then we have played a few more shows in Hattiesburg, and one coming up in Birmingham, but have yet to have a show in Oxford and honestly we might be lucky if we get to. Starting this punk band in Oxford has been a large step for this town and is slowly trying to rebirth something that once was here, again. Anyone that is in the same position I am in, that lives in a small town, and feels like they can't be a "punk" or contribute to a DIY community, know that you can make a difference and to never give up. Being a punk in a small community, like Oxford, is being a punk where it matters and it's the combat rockers like yourself that keep punk alive and fresh in the greater community worldwide.

—Tyler Ricketts
tericketts@go.olemiss.edu

It has recently come to our attention that the French artist Paris Violence, who we reviewed in issue 414, is the work of a neo-Nazi. Maximum Rocknroll *does not condone Nazism, and has a strict no-platform policy towards any bands and artists with a Nazi ideology. One of the perils of having an international focus on punk is that we will not always have information that other people may have. This inevitably leads to us covering musicians whose work we cannot and do not support due to their ideological beliefs. We apologize for featuring Paris Violence, and we are thankful of our friends abroad who have messaged us about their Nazi ideology.*

CONTRIBUTE TO MRR

In addition to scene reports, guest columns, and interviews, we're looking for a few specific contributions:

We want some new columnists to write about Hardcore with a capital H and garage rock, as well as regular columnists from South and Central America, the UK, and Southeast Asia. For consideration, send a sample column and a list of three topics you'd cover in future columns.

FILM AND PHOTO ISSUE

We're accepting submissions for our next special issue. Photographers, send five of your best images for consideration. Filmmakers, let us know what you're working on! We'll get in touch with the best submissions in order to develop features.

ABORTION ON DEMAND WITHOUT APOLOGY

Have you been involved in organizing around abortion-related legislation where you live? Do you have an abortion story (positive or negative!) that you'd like to share? Do you want to be a part of normalizing conversations around access to reproductive rights? We're planning a special feature. Contact us if you'd like to contribute.

SEX WORK IS REAL WORK

We're collecting perspectives from sex workers around the world for an on-going series of guest columns, 1000–2000 words in length. Discretion guaranteed.

MRR@MAXIMUMROCKNROLL.COM

COLUMNS

futures and pasts
*erika elizabeth

A brief and unrelated introduction to this month's column: Grant Hart passed away a few weeks ago, and I feel that in his honor, I should use the platform graciously provided to me in this internationally-distributed punk magazine to once again reiterate (and record in print for posterity) my apparently controversial opinion that Grant Hart's songs in HÜSKER DÜ were always better than Bob Mould's songs in HÜSKER DÜ. Feel free to fight me on that (you wouldn't be the first)—my contact info is at the end of this thing.

The brief lifespan of English quartet TERMINAL FUN, who formed in 1981 and had splintered by 1983, almost perfectly aligns with the boom and bust of UK DIY's golden era that yielded countless other one hit wonders who have barely registered as blips on the radar of the greater collective post-punk consciousness. In an unusual spin on the DESPERATE BICYCLES' rallying cry of "*it was easy, it was cheap, go and do it!*," the group scraped together the money to release their 7" in 1982 by soliciting advertisements from local businesses in Norwich that were then printed on the back of the record's sleeve, in case any obsessives of John Peel's radio program needed to source some shoe repair or personal stereo equipment while flipping through their boxes of singles. The two songs are basically textbook early '80s femme-punk, with A-side "Great Moments" kicking into a stuttering DELTA 5-esque drumbeat as Carole Bush's sweetly airy vocals in the verse give way to a co-ed call-and-response with her bandmates Paul Day and Pete Sparrow in the chorus—think shades of TWELVE CUBIC FEET, for the true *Messthetics* heads out there. The sneaky AU PAIRS-ish bassline in "Twist and Survive" pushes things in a slightly moodier direction, punctuated by Carole's sing-song delivery giving way to ecstatic shrieks of "*twist!*" that always make me think of MAXIMUM JOY's classic "Stretch" without really sounding anything like it. There's also three songs that TERMINAL FUN recorded for a scrapped EP in 1983 that have since surfaced on guitarist Paul Day's website, and they capture the band's sound shifting into the sort of gothier, more synth-driven direction that SIOUXSIE and the BANSHEES had pretty much cornered at the time. It's all well worth a dig through the archives, and the single can actually still be found for less than the price of avocado toast in your average urban center. (luvmusic.org/pre-1990s)

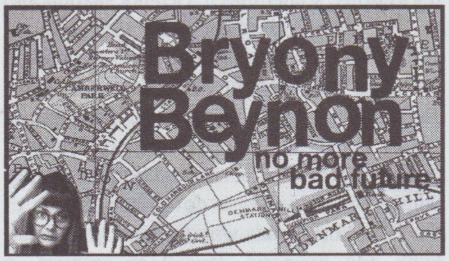
Promotional Cassette 2 is the very accurately-titled second tape from Oakland's NEUTRALS, paying some serious stylistic debts to the transitional period between post-punk and C86 in the early-to-mid '80s UK underground—had they actually existed back then, NEUTRALS could have fit on the Cherry Red roster next to the MONOCHROME SET just as easily as they could have on Creation Records alongside MEAT WHIPLASH . Things start out on the group's more pop-leaning side with "Motorcycle Cop," which completely nails the anorak-and-a-Rickenbacker mod jangle of the TELEVISION PERSONALITIES with a similarly dark and melancholic streak lurking beneath the deceptively sunny wide-eyed melodies, while "Private Museums" centers the stripped-down, post-*Pink Flag* post-punkisms of a propulsive bassline and rapid slashes of guitar. "England's Not a Place" and "24 Pictures of You" both settle somewhere in the middle of those two ends of the spectrum, reconciling stop-start rhythms with jittery six-string chime in the most perfectly '83 in '17 fashion. It's all utterly charming, and you should really pick up their first tape from last year while you're at it, too. (neutrals.bandcamp.com)

I'd written about awhile back about a pair of digital EPs from Manchester jumpy post-punks DUDS, who have since been brought into the Castle Face Records fold for their debut LP *Of A Nature or Degree*, which is hopefully part of that label's atonement for past crimes of flooding the market with bland psych bands (and, in at least one instance, bland psych bands with right-wing sympathies). The rhythms are all dialed in with a tightly-wound mechanical precision, the basslines pretty much exclusively channel the writhing funk of GANG OF FOUR, and it all intersects with trebly, minimalist cling-clang guitar and the sort of dryly conversational deadpan vocals that English post-punk bands have been seemingly mandated to implement since about 1978. Horns pop up here and there (sometimes it's a cornet, sometimes it's a tenor saxophone) to add some dissonant, skronky, texture. And, when the drumming rides the cowbell for some truly mutant disco beats (see "Pro Tem" or the hyper-economical 34 seconds of "A Different Stage"), it's pretty obvious that DUDS have at least a passing familiarity with the post-No Wave downtown sounds of the New York bands who bridged spiky post-punk and hypnotic dancefloor grooves—a more uptight LIQUID LIQUID, maybe? Album closer "Reward Indifference" might be the only spot on the entire album where the buttoned-up tension gives way to a more twangy sprawl, with liberal nods to the most fractured FALL-indebted faction of '90s-era Scottish DIY scene (one part YUMMY FUR, one part COUNTRY TEASERS). Nothing here is reinventing the post-punk wheel in the slightest, but if you're going to steal, you might as well steal from the best. (Castle Face, castlefacerecords.com)

PRIVATE ANARCHY is the new Madison, Wisconsin-based, mostly-one-man-band from Clay Kolbinger, who has previously been mostly entrenched in the cut-up sound collage and experimental free-noise cassette underground and whose latest project now finds him rummaging through the aural history of the last forty years of scrappy DIY punk racket. The label threw around some comparisons to the likes of the FALL and SWELL MAPS, two names that are too frequently taken in vain and tend to immediately trigger my skepticism, but I think that any parallels to be drawn here are more in terms of the slightly shambolic and off-kilter aesthetic that PRIVATE ANARCHY's new self-titled cassette shares with the freewheeling oddballs of the late '70s / early '80s UK post-punk underground. It's not a complete backwards-gazing retread here, though—the anxious talk-shouted vocals, scribble-scratch guitar and clattering drums in "The Country's

Licked" and "The Last Act" are derived from the same basic formula that SPRAY PAINT have been working from over the last several years, with PRIVATE ANARCHY adding a certain distinctly-Midwestern influence drawn from the PERE UBU school of warbly post-industrial art damage. A pretty solid debut tape, and in another fifteen years or so, I wouldn't be surprised to see some of these songs pop up alongside those of fellow home-taping oddball ERIK NERVOUS on some *Bloodstains*-style compilation devoted to the works of Great Lakes-area econo-punks in the 2010s. (Round Bale Recordings, roundbalerecordings.bandcamp.com)

Say hey at ripitupstartagain@gmail.com, more sights and sounds at futuresandpasts.org.



Last week I went to an exhibition series here in Sydney called The Public Body. I passed the flagship booth of a locally famous pie shop called Harry's Cafe de Wheels, backlit by the gunmetal grey bulwark of a war ship which blocks almost the entire horizon. There, in this former shipping warehouse, in one tiny plywood corner of the show, was a small scrappy excerpt of Donna Haraway's *A Cyborg Manifesto*, printed on an A4 piece of paper and tacked to the wall.

Since this accidental reunion with her text, I've reread it four times and stolen her lines for a song. (Sorry.) She sets out how we might escape binaries (from the gendered to those of capital) or move beyond them, all contingent on a sense that new technologies would set the world, and women, free.

Donna was writing in 1990 but in 2004, when I first read the *Manifesto*, it registered more like some type of already dated sci-fi, both arcane and funny to me. I was eighteen and I thought I knew where we were going. Her writing holds this wide-eyed certainty of a future beyond (yet within) our bodies that to teenage me seemed like a miscalculation. We would outlive and outlast all that, wouldn't we? Friendster was hardly brains in jars.

To read the manifesto now is to mourn a whole universe of lost possibilities that seem both hopelessly quaint but beautifully real. Back then, the era of "the end of history," fall of the Berlin Wall, when neoliberal consensus, it seemed, had finally be reached, Donna and other radicals sought to escape to other frontiers of speeding up tech, blissfully blind to just how fully recuperated and foreclosed the potential for future internet freedoms would be. They might have envisioned online for a new utopia, but something else happened. This email could be your life. Today's internet feels like its own tech "end of history" moment. A fully embedded consensus that we have total information, that disruption just means new and exciting ways to enforce meat space barbarism, consensually screwed by capital. Yes, there's all that hot air about space travel and living forever, but the ever accelerating technologies are for the ultra-wealthy only, while the proles can just buy (or die mining the minerals for) a phone. Leave it be. Now I read Haraway's manifesto (plenty of free pdfs online) as one of the most clearly elucidated examples of a future facing feminism there is, and find possibilities for us even in this consensual tech totalitarian quagmire. Crucially, she fills out and offers up our blessed, stretchy, category of woman. When our bodies move through a world that hates us, solidarity across vessels is fundamental. "Both are bound in the spiral dance, but I'd rather be a cyborg than a goddess."

The word "cyber" immediately makes me think of Msn Messenger too. Dial up internet let me escape my body in a near total way (at least for the first few years until I got that one megapixel webcam) Teenagers seeking disembodied pleasures. We also spoke to strangers, but the social codes of the schoolyard didn't apply to the internet. Boys who would not speak to me in school had plenty to say on "the net." I learnt my place. This all seems somehow both fiercely radical and hopelessly naive in our era of Instagram models. Teenagers seeking disembodied pleasures.

VNS Matrix were to first to use the term "cyberfeminism" in 1991. They were a collective of freaky modem angels somewhere between Adelaide (in South Australia, much of which incidentally still doesn't have broadband) and Warwick University. They wanted to shed the physical. They would dismantle the techno-patriarchy. I wonder what they would think of YouTube yoga stars. "We are the virus of the new world disorder, rupturing the symbolic from within, saboteurs of big daddy mainframe, the clitoris is a direct line to the matrix, the VNS Matrix" They were writing before even what I think of as "the old online," too, the pinging static of an endless stream of glorified classified ads, anarchic naïveté.

In 1997 my oldest sister met a boy in a CompuServe chat room. He used to call the house phone. He was from Cincinnati and sent her a tin of a local meat in the mail. It sat in the back of the cupboard. She and I would fight for a seat at the beige box. In 2000 I started posting on a generic email provider's message board. My first thread was entitled "metal / indie / punk / grunge," which I deliberated on for some hours, just to cover all bases. At the board meet up, the boy I had been focusing on kissed a skinny girl with cut marks on her arms instead of me. What was *her* username? Did she even post?! Mother met me from the coach station after a sixteen-hour journey and I cried just because I was tired.

Seventeen years later my thighs are too warm from the laptop and I sit adrift in the acid sea of social media, which barks analysis of current events, the spiral dance reduced to rocking back n forth. The figure of the "foreign" (depending on where you're standing) hacker meddling with an election now seems rather quaint, a bark back to Donna's universe, except now they get paid by governments. Julian Assange has not shed the physical and is also a rapist. Drinking in the fugue of despair, moisturizing with other people's rage spit, I tap at the screen hoping to be seen. I pay to listen to a podcast made by genius idiots or idiot geniuses (episode dependent) and worry I'm losing it completely. Support your creators. Create your supporters. I pass a weird sign or a cool bug and my hands move to broadcast it before my brain catches up. Watching the fifteen-second clip back, I quickly mute the audio, caught by a visceral half-second of raw disgust at having caught the sound of my own breath. Add to story.

I also sit here helping build a new website for *Maximum Rocknroll* with people whose skills exceed mine and are on the opposite end of the planet. Gauche as it seems to name these processes, I feel duty bound to note the ways we live now, even if only to brutally date this issue of the magazine. Beyond the adorably earnest "Is the internet changing DIY?" roundtables from fifteen years ago, it seems like we've all settled into "The Way We Live," collectively party to a silent agreement that it's deeply uncool to mention technology in these pages or our punk output. I remember happening upon a millennium column in an old issue where former coordinator Chris Hubbard explained how to use a blog with a not unreasonable undercurrent of trepidation and fear. Given that *MRR* has gracefully published my malformed chat for almost a decade, perhaps a timestamp for future punks in a different bathroom is helpful.

So what's it like? In 2017, if I am alone, I cycle between applications on a phone, refreshing relentlessly until I catch the time or the spine of a book in the corner of my eye and chastise myself—I'll move in a minute. This guilt process provides a few minutes of respite every other hour, plus on social occasions where manners do still override. If I have a work deadline, I use an app called Self Control. At 11:50 PM each evening I rush to complete a quiz before midnight, else I lose my "streak" in the app I am using to try and relearn my first language. You can regain the streak for an in-app purchase of only $6.99. My brain retains almost none of this largely useless vocabulary, which the app makers have accounted for, meaning the scores erode and I am tested on the same words every few nights.

Dear future punk, I hope your time is better. I hope this all seems funny to you. I certainly hope you can't relate. In the past before you and even further, before me, they needed to believe we'd have jetpacks. Just like them, I need to locate the future, where you live, as somewhere better, just to keep living today. (The contemporary equivalent of jetpacks, I fear, is a little thing called "luxury communism.") I want to believe something is shifting. Then I get distracted, then I get guilty, then I silently empty the last of my PayPal into another GoFundMe page, each donation like a vague Hail Mary to the light.

SEX WORK IS REAL WORK

Queenie Bon Bon is a current sex worker, political comedic writer and sexological body worker who has worked in strip clubs, massage parlors and brothels in Australia and the UK, and is a member of Debbie Doesn't Do It For Free, the Australian sex worker art collective. This is part three of four.

"Getting paid, getting laid, Adelaide." The city has no such official slogan, but here we go.

Every time we go on to the podium, the same tracks accompany us. My podium times are shared with a former Miss Nude Australia; former Miss Nude Australia is on the main stage doing some gymnastical magic to her best tunes. She loves light rock music, and that's fine, she can love whatever she wants. One must hear the callings of the heart. We all heard them, and gyrated. Her top three songs were by the recording artists Nickelback, Evanescence, and Foo Fighters. None of these are my favorite, though the lead singer from Nickelback has the exact same hair as cocker spaniel ears, and the more we can integrate canine styles into the mainstream fashion, the better, I say. It's sad about his music though.

My podium time begins with Nickelback's 2001 hit "How You Remind Me." In the 2000s the video was seared into my brain. Not that I was a fan, it just happened. In it, Nickleback's singer is shown pretending to be a man whose love interest has left him—he is haunted by her memory and sees her everywhere he goes. There's this arty visual where the light changes when she touches him, it is a cue to make us understand that he is a deep and sensitive man. Eventually he gets over her, but once he does she shows up to reconnect with him. This is what he thought he had wanted all along but suddenly he realizes that it isn't what he wants, and pushes her away. She is left with a broken heart and haunted by memories. He has made an anthem for the Wah-wah Society of Men Who Can't Love.

Let us dismantle the cult of masculinity. We don't need to praise it. We are better than this. I find it really hard not to show on my face how I feel about all this while I am on the podium. I also feel confronted that I seem to know all the words, but I mean there are all sorts of things that we just *know*.

Whenever I dismount a podium I always pretend it's like I just did a gymnastic performance and do a nod to all standing at the podium. This makes me feel very official. I think it's ok for me to say that Nickelback is not for me. I find it hard to not judge what seems to be a slew of Nickelback fans sitting around me and yet I am almost unable to not start intros by saying "If you don't like the dance I'll give you a nickel back." When I'm back in the worker's room, I clean tan off my white swim wear. A lovely girl with big hair who has the same podium times as me walks in and sits in front the mirror next to me to reattach her wig.

"Did you work somewhere else before here?" she asks me. "Yeah I was working at a parlour," I reply. "But I got fired."

This happened. In the past three weeks I have been fired from three brothels. Well actually only two, officially. I left the third one with their share of the money and mine, and I exited out the back. That's not getting fired, but it does mean you can't return, which is perhaps reasonable. However, I left because I did not feel *they* were reasonable, so maybe we were just even. It's hard to say. In the other two I was definitely properly fired. In one place the receptionist asked me If I had charged a customer $160 for a certain sexual act. I said absolutely not, because in South Australia it is strictly illegal to charge for any sexual services. She tells me he is an old regular of theirs and he is very upset that I took his money. I reply that a regular should know that those services are not available. When the receptionist leaves, the other woman in the room looks at and tells me I am behaving very badly.

When I note that *he* behaved badly by calling to complain, she tells me it is just a kink he has and I was not meant to charge him. I reply "It was a kink to charge him, I thought he would like it." When she tells me that is not how it works, I retort "Well, it did work, so I guess in some ways it *is* how it works here, and yet because you're all pretending we are not actually in a brothel I can't ask anyone to check this."

We are in silence. The next thing someone says is that it is ok for me to go home. On my way out I steal a bottle of shower gel and candle and a towel. It's a kink I have.

The next place I get fired from asks me for ID. I tell them that I don't think they need ID. She tells me she would rather I brought it. I tell her that, unfortunately, I have lost it. She says I cannot worth there then, unfortunately. I really need to work so I "find" the ID but she thinks it is fake. She is right and I tell her so, I tell her I can get my passport except I don't have a key to my house. She says, fortunately, she can wait, and I can work until lunch time—she reminds me that no full service is allowed.

After some hours she tells me she is concerned that I have taken a bag into the bookings, after she had told me that they don't allow bags in the bookings as it encourages girls to bring in condoms and hide money or drugs. I assure her that I'm not hiding anything, it's just that the bag looks nice with my frock. She asks if she can look in my bag, I tell her that, although I'm not hiding anything, I am using my bag to store one or more of the items she is worried about girls having in their bags. I tell her not to look in my bag as she will only upset herself. I thank her as I have loved the air conditioning, power shower, and cable television but will just be off now. She tells me I'm fired and that they are trying to run a legit business here, and people like me are ruining it. I tell her that the South Australian government is actually the one ruining it, and if you want a legit business don't open an illegal one. She says it's girls like me who give this place a bad name. I tell her it's actually the bad name that keeps it busy. And then we part ways.

Back in the girls' room, the girl with the big hair looks at me. "What, you're a prostitute??" "Um yeah I guess, I mean yeah." "Woah I have never met one before" "Oh you definitely have, we walk among you." I look at her and I think she is lovely and that we are having a connection, and I feel nice. Then she says "Yeah I think it's really...really gross." I realize we are not having a lovely connection.

She takes her drinky and walks out into the main space. I walk down the stairs and to my podium. Nickelback say they are tired of living *"without of sense of feeling."* I'd hate that, I'm always feeling so much all the time, how could I navigate anything if it wasn't this way. The girl I'm taking over from gets off the podium. I'm about to get up and then I realize I simply cannot gyrate for another moment to this rock. It's OK, they still have Miss Nude South Australia. I'm hardly important in this entertainment trifecta. I walk back towards the changing rooms. The girl who has just come off the podium, thinks I'm confused:

"Hey, no, you are meant to get on the podium now." "No it's ok, they said I don't have to." "Who said that?" "They did." "Who is they?" "Well, no one has said it said it, but it's just not reasonable to make me dance to Nickleback one more time so I shan't do it." And then I say "I feel like they are making me live in a Nickelcage," which doesn't even make sense and then immediately feel foolish.

I put on my day clothes, and walk to the front desk where the stage mum is standing, I hand her my tag that keeps record of our dances. "Well thanks for a lovely time, it's been so nice here, I have loved all the nice things like the stage and the flags and the dancing and the girls and the poles and our nice funny wrist bands, it's all been lovely but I must be off now" I think if I exit like I'm leaving a children's party she won't say anything.

She says, "You can't just leave." "Everyone is doing such a good job that you'll hardly notice, and I just really need to leave because I can't hear this song a single more time, it's just making me feel, you know, I'm just having a lot of feelings, it's not even professional the amount of feelings I'm having." She says "okay"—it's nice when we can be reasonable. And that's it, I shut the office down for the night. And tomorrow I'll return to Melbourne. Thank you Adelaide, you've been bountiful.

When I had first got to Adelaide I gave a talk about myths about sex work. At the end there was a Q&A, the first thing I was asked is what makes me feel empowered in my job. In no other area of my life do people feel like they have so much ownership over my lifestyle choices. In no other area do people so constantly demand that I be empowered. We are all part of this system and we all deserve more than it gives us. You know I don't have to be empowered for my job to be ok, and it's limiting for you to want me to be.

I get to be part of a community that is made of the most magical people I have met and I get to feel like I'm in a coven all the time. I don't want to ever have to justify my choices to make you feel okay. I am part of a movement that is made up of bodies that subvert ideas of what it is ok to want and desire. For years I have been part of the night people. I think of the different worlds I move between. The day and night versions of myself are both truths. I look at the moon. She is a goddess. But the goddesses in my life are not mythical beings. Every goddess I have ever loved walks among us. The moon is above me, above all of us. I don't have to be constantly empowered but I can take everything that is happening and say I shall power up. I love the marvelous marvels and wondrous wonders that the journeys hold. I walk alone in the darkness down Henley Beach road and the air is hot and still. I could do anything. I'm wearing waterproof mascara. I'm ready for it. I mean, we can all just go into the night. Not all stories have an end, but the house mother was right: you don't have to go home, but you can't stay here.

ANDREW UNDERWOOD

GBG hardcore. That's a phrase that carries little meaning for the vast majority of people in this world, and even to a majority of punks. But, to a few, it immediately conjures images of studded leather and broken bottles, freezing snowdrifts and red-hot riffs. The hardcore scene in Gothenburg, Sweden in the early-to-mid-'80s was arguably the best in the world. Certainly the impact of its legacy releases, most notably the SHITLICKERS's *GBG 1982* EP (aka *Cracked Copskullls*), ABSURD's *Blodig Stad*, DISARM's *Dömd* and the catalog of ANTI-CIMEX are some of the most influential hardcore recordings of all time. The new issue of *Negative Insight* zine takes a thorough and extremely illuminating look at the history and personalities involved in creating this nigh-miraculous confluence of boredom, booze, and hardcore's *enfants terribles*.

Moreso even than the previous issues, *Negative Insight* #3 is a masterpiece of graphic design, hand-crafted and laid out with a keen eye for '80s style, right down to the impeccable fonts and vintage-style advertisements, including a throwback classifieds section and (if you order early) a double fistful of paper ads from various bands and labels included with your order. The print quality is superb, which is primarily important because the issue offers up a goldmine of rare photos, most notably in the excellent spread of shots by Sebastian Todor, a veteran of the GBG scene. This feature is probably the first thing you should flip to in the mag, as his photos of both bands and candid photos of punks are incredibly evocative of the scene you'll be immersing yourself in throughout. There are short but insightful interviews with ABSURD and DISARM, but the real meat of the zine is taken up by three amazing features: a long and remarkably candid interview with Lasse, the singer of SHITLICKERS, an equally probing interrogation of ANTI-CIMEX drummer Charlie, and an incredibly detailed date-by-date recounting of ANTI-CIMEX's 1986 UK "Chainsaw Tour." These features are invaluable for both hardcore fans and the uninitiated, touching on everything from obscure pressing details to the daily lives of the band members, with innumerable accounts of drunken and destructive behavior scattered throughout. Lasse in particular is a fantastic interview, crushingly cynical at times but offering up remarkably detailed memories of the life and times of the SHITLICKERS. The history of the Chainsaw Tour piece is stunning, offering up first-hand accounts of every gig save one and including photos of individual gigs where available. Taken as a whole, this is easily the best issue of any zine to be released this year (including this one!), it's value only increased by the inclusion of a repress of the *GBG 1982* EP made from the original pressing plates (!). Full disclosure: I did write a very tiny bit of text for the zine, and I am well chuffed to have my name in any way associated with this work. I hereby solemnly swear that my opinion of this zine would be just as high (possibly higher!) if I had fuck all to do with it. My copy is already dog-eared from re-reading and yours will be too.

About that EP… no need to review *GBG 1982* as it is one of the most iconic punk records of all time. Much like *Citizen Kane*, even if you haven't consumed it directly, you've been marinating in its influence for a lifetime. If "Warsystem" isn't one of the top five most-covered tracks in hardcore history I'll eat my hat. Four note-perfect tracks of nihilistic hardcore that pound the then-brand new DISCHARGE formula into paste and rebuild it as a shorter, faster, louder, and meaner golem of the same. Political in the sense that it rages against the system but offering not a glimmer of hope or suggestion of change. This is not an avatar of punk as a transformational force, it is an avatar of punk as the soundtrack of the damned and the doomed. Being pressed from the original plates, this sounds worlds better than any copy you may own unless you're one of the tiny handful to own and original copy, and even then this pressing isn't over 30 years old. Clean graphic design that largely replicates the original sleeve completes the packaging. I don't give a fuck if you're the gnarliest cruster to ever sprout a dread or the most staunch defender of pop punk to ever live, this record belongs in your collection.

Let's stay Gothenburg-adjacent for the moment and talk about Kristinehamn's AVSKUM. Active since the early '80s (albeit with a bit of a break in the '90s), AVSKUM are another iconic Swedish band to walk the DISCHARGE path. Best known for their *Crucified By The System* EP, a record that launched a million patches, they actually have a broad and remarkably consistent discography, quality-wise. Check out their tracks from 2000's split 10" with REALITY CRISIS or the criminally underrated *Punkista* LP from '03 for proof. Or just check out the *Unreleased and Released Tracks Between 1982 and 1999* (that's a mouthful!) collection for proof. Originally released on Skrammel records as a double LP last year, I picked up the sweet double cassette version released on Malaysia's Sickhead records recently and it's a killer. 41 tracks of devastating kängpunk, with touches of MÖTORHEAD and even a bit of KILLING JOKE in some of the mid-period material. The unreleased studio session from 1988 included in the recording is fucking blazing; it's shocking that it has never been heard until now. I haven't heard the vinyl version, which probably sounds a bit cleaner, but the sound quality of these tapes is kind of perfect for the band and the material, rough and slightly lo-fi without anything being lost in the mix. That rough-and-ready quality carries over to the packaging, which consists of a sweet silk-screened paper box holding the two tapes, both with j-cards featuring photos of the band and basic information about the recordings in classic punky collage style. Standing in the shadows of giants like those profiled in the zine above, it's been hard for AVSKUM to get the acknowledgment they truly deserve, hopefully these reissues go some distance towards rectifying that.

Unsurprisingly, given the label's track record, FOAD Records's first-time vinyl reissue of JUNTESS's 1991 *Under the Red Moon* CD is a much more elaborate package. Housed in a glorious glossy gatefold sleeve, this record looks and sounds fantastic. Those curious about Japanese hardcore may have encountered one of JUNTESS's lesser records, particularly the widely available but quite mediocre split with DOCTOR AND THE CRIPPENS. This might as well have been the work of an entirely different band. This is high-test rocket fuel in hardcore form, flowing over with metallic guitar solos (dude is soloing over choruses, just fucking raging all over the place!) and classic hard-as-nails vocals. The most brilliant moments come when the band embraces their melodic instincts, as in "Fight Against It," which features both a soaring central riff and a thrilling double-tracked solo. Or hell, take the rock'n'rolling intro of "Dead or Alive," which sounds like MOTLEY CRÜE until it blasts off with a massive hardcore riff. If you can imagine the best elements of late '80s pop metal having a back alley assignation with Burning Spirits hardcore, this record is the big-haired, brass knuckles-sporting offspring of that meeting. As I frequently do, I have to give credit to the rhythm section, who nimbly switch between supporting the crazed guitarist in his more metallic flights of fancy and keeping things driving along in a hardcore style when necessary. The drummer in particular snaps effortlessly from rock-style theatrical drumming to lightning fast hardcore thrash attacking. This is a great album, sadly overlooked due to having been released in fairly limited numbers on an unpopular format. Now's the time to check it the fuck out!

This isn't supposed to be a reissues only column, and I would never want it to be. So let's touch on a couple of new releases to finish out the month, huh? First off, let's talk about Canada's DECADE! This is ex-ABSOLUT and the graphics are completely saturated with DISCHARGE tributes, so you should know what to expect. And you're probably right! This is reverb-laden, blown-out D-Beat fucking hardcore, bleak as fuck and noizy as hell. There are a handful of short, shrieking solos but mostly this is driven by frantic drumming and vicious vocals, with some cool noise effects and choice samples in the mix as well. The Rainy-style bass lines are particularly impressive, busy and complex without being show-offy. Six tracks that go by in the blink of an eye, with no lapses or moments of weakness to speak of. This one comes to us courtesy of Ruinstate Tapes, be on the lookout for it.

Let's wrap up with a slightly less bleak release! How about Japan's DUSTPÄN and their new *The Ulitmate Scum Has Taken Form…* cassette? This band has been around for quite a while, but this is my first encounter with them and it's fuckin' great! This is total '80s thrash (Pushead definition of "thrash" of course) a-la LÄRM circa the STANX split and *Never Healed*-era HERESY. Fast, loosely structured, and super high-energy with a great everything faster than everything else feel. The recording is very live sounding, which definitely works to the band's strengths. The wild solos are sparingly applied but kill when they appear, the vocalist is about tearing his vocal cords to get the words out, and the drummer is hitting hard and fuckin' fast. Ten tracks, with only two topping the one minute mark and none over two. Punx in the US can check out Not Very Nice Records for a copy, otherwise contact the band at takotakotakokun@hotmail.com to pick up a copy. Comes with a download code!

Fin. Thanks as always for reading. And seriously, pick up fucking *Negative Insight*, it's amazing!

FELIX HAVOC
FIN DE SIÈCLE ANGST

I've written in this space before about my love for '70s and '80s sci-fi. One of my all time favorite movies is the 1982 masterpiece *Blade Runner*. Adapted from Philip K. Dick's *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep*, this movie captured all that is great about sci-fi cinema. A grimly prophetic tale about hubris, technology, greed, and love set in the bleak future of… 2019. This cult classic combined hardboiled film noir and dystopian paranoid sci-fi. When released in 1982 I think it captured the imagination of a lot of people in the punk scene with it's pre "cyber punk" vision of the future. It has retained that cult status 30 years on. Now a sequel has been released and I was pumped for it. I must say the film looked and sounded great. The director really captured the aesthetic and visuals of the original *Blade Runner*. The plot was just ok and kind of dragged. I think you could watch it with no dialogue and enjoy it just as much. Don't let my disappointment discourage you, this movie deserves to be seen, I just had set my sights a little higher than how it turned out.

We've been talking here about Dutch and Belgian punk from the heroic era of 1977–1984. I'd like to take step back and talk about the many comps that provide an overview of this scene and era. One thing I like about these retrospective,comps is that they kind of level the playing field so that a band on a major label that had big production and studio access (Flyin' Spyderz) appears next to a very DIY punk band that pressed up a few hundred 7"s (Nixe).

For Holland there is an excellent 2-CD compilation that is widely available as streaming audio called *I Don't Care Collection, Dutch Punk 1977-1983*. This comp is great because many of the bands have their whole 7" compiled rather than just one or two tracks. I think this comp does the best job of covering the most important bands and providing a broad overview. I've only listened to it online, so I can't tell you if it has an informative booklet or liner notes, but the music and curation is top notch.

The *Bloodstains* series is one of the best known retrospective compilations, and although there is no Holland, there are *three* volumes of *Bloodstains Across Belgium*. The first two volumes include the best known bands and a few novelty / obscurity / outliers, while the third volume focuses a bit more on the obscure. I would rate all three volumes as worth buying in the $10 range or less. While I appreciate the effort that went into these comps, they are increasingly irrelevant in the age of streaming audio. In the '90s these comps were great introductions to lesser known scenes and obscure bands, not so much now, but they are still fun to listen to.

There is also a comp called *Bloody Belgium* which has pretty much all the same bands as the *Bloodstains Across Belgium* comps but with different tracks. It's worth a spin for sure. It's also a better overview of Belgian punk on one LP if you don't want to spring for all three volumes of *Bloodstains*. I'm not sure how, but Epitaph records wound up releasing a CD compilation called *I'm Sure We're Gonna Make It* in the mid 90's. Taking it's title from the Ivy Green song, this comp was a great introduction to Dutch punk, focusing on the best known bands. In those days there was a lot of push back against CDs and the commodification of punk music. Many zines would not review CDs or titles with barcodes on them as they were not DIY and represented an attempt to package punk for mainstream mall consumerism. One manifestation of this backlash was bootlegging of CD-only releases on vinyl. In an uproarious display of chutzpah some dialed in record collector types bootlegged the Epitaph CD onto vinyl, changing the title to *Killed by Epitaph*. I don't think I ever saw the CD, but the LP is still a great listen. Although I would note almost every track also appears on the *I Don't Care* collection (which also has more tracks by each band). Still, this one is worth picking up or listening too as it's well put together.

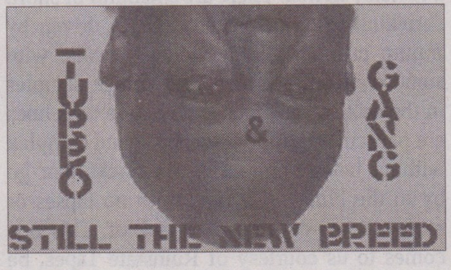
Another cool comp is *Feel Lucky Skunk* LP from 1997. Again, there is a lot of overlap, but it's basically different tracks by the same bands as Killed By *Epitaph* plus the addition of a handful of bands, notably Vultures.

There's another comp LP called *Punkrock from Holland* which has most of the same bands (but mostly different tracks) as *Killed By Epitaph* and *Feel Lucky Skunk*. There are a few bands (Railbirds, Suspense) who don't show up on the other comps, and again, I'd say it's worth buying in the $10 range just because it's fun to listen to.

I don't have a copy (I'm not into CDs), but there is a cool CD comp from 2003 called *100% Pure Dutch Punk Hardcore* which is cool because it compiles both early punk and hardcore bands, while most of the comps just focus on the early punk bands. Basically this is just a mash up of *Feel Lucky Skunk* with the *Als Je Haar Maar Goed Zit* comps, that said, I still have a CD player in my truck, so if someone handed me a burned CD of this I would not hand it back. But I don't think it's worth seeking out unless you are some kind of CD collector.

Another CD is *Everything's Shit, Punk in Brussels '77-'79*. This comp is cool because it's quite a few tracks from each band, and has the whole Chainsaw 7". But since it only focuses on one city, there's some tracks that are just OK but probably more meaningful in documenting that local scene.

Now let's get analytical. In 2017 is there any point to these kind of comps? If you bought all these comps you would probably have spent enough to buy one or two original 7"s and bypass all the reissues. Today's collector can live in a world of no compromise buying only the original and streaming everything else. Or of course, streaming everything and buying *no* records, which seems terribly popular as well. That said, the age of the compilation is basically over, but these records do still have value. They are well curated and concise introductions to a scene or era the listener may have known little about until checking it out.



"Feel the rain like an English summer.
Hear the notes from a distant song.
Stepping out from a back shop poster,
Wishing life wouldn't be so long."
— VISAGE, "Fade to Grey"

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"New Romantics you're too elite!
You ain't worthy to kiss me feet.
You're looking down on all you meet,
New Romantics you're too elite!
Fucking wankers!"
— COMBAT 84, "Poseur"

Rock Against Slime

You crumbly stumbly bumbly bums! Don't be fooled by this magazine! (Wake up creeples!) *MRR* will tell you that the world is filled with people who actually enjoy LUMPY & THE DUMPERS or XYLITOL (we're skins, not punks) and if you ain't an adjunct-librarian or part of that Coastal Anarcho-University Elite (aka Astro-Glide Zombies) you ain't punx. Well, the gang and I are here to tell yinz that *Still the New Breed*™ is here for yall. For you who drive a forklift to junior college...Or attend UC Merced! For you who're sick of punk sounding like a third grade talent show (We're stuck in ninth grade thankyouverymuch!). For you who drink coffee brand coffee and like it that way!

Understand this: grosso Muppet punk is the vogue-iest of vogues. And if yer slorping it up hear me now: someday yer acne will dry out and you'll get tired of having armpit fungus (and a bad haircut!). Where will you turn? Your squat (or mom's house) is built on a tar pit. You've been living on dirty diesel and ingesting so much gunge yall still (still!) look like extras from *Mad Max* and *Waterworld*; two movies where people were obsessed with toxic fuel. This is peak-punx! Nowhere to go but down. (And deeper into blackout-synth™? Blech!) Must be a better way, yeah?

Oi! has been the single stable structure in all of Punkdom (pop-punk gets a nod if you're a revisionist, we are not!). How have we, *the chosen few*, stayed so strong? Oi! is a platform built on bedrock and powered by the sun. We don't shift or change. The sound of Oi! is Helios goading Abraxas and Bronte forward, straight and true (since 1978)! It is the constant rumble of Oi!-the-Ziggurat being built ever skyward. A structure fully staffed by skinheads. You don't have to be a skin to live in the temple of Oi!, but if you see a booted baldo while enjoying yer slime-free existence you should shake their hand. Cuz the skinhead keeps the lights on and keeps the sludge at bay.

Oi! isn't always good. But it's always there. Whether you want to take a ride on this fantastic voi!age is your choi!ce. Oi! pilled!

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ASAS DA VINGANÇA – "Nao Queremos Saber / Sangue Lusitano" (Combate Brutal): Premiere release from new Portuguese label Combate Brutal! This is ASAS DA VINGANÇA's third EP and it's their best yet. "Nao Queremos Saber" kicks off with a *Clockwork Orange* clip of the droogs getting into a ruck with "fat stinking Billy goat Billy Boy" and goes straight for the yarbles with ten grit vocals and overdriven riffs. A surprise CHUCK BERRY moment springs up in the chorus! Drums are martial and keep everyone in line. "Sangue Lusitano" has the band addressing their Lusitanian heritage. It's looser than the A-side with a freewheelin' solo weaving in and out. This is tops skinhead-rock from some of Lisbon's finest. Band has connections to a grip of current Portuguese Oi! bands: FACÇÃO OPPOSTA, FALCATA, ATLANTES.

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LAZY CLASS – *Pressure Rising* EP (Spirit of the Streets): Jello said it best, "It's like a bad laxative, it just doesn't move me ya know?" I will never quote him again! This is upbeat mid-tempo Oi! that borders on streetpunk. Not my favorite corner of contemporary Oi! but probably the most common. These Poles are more comparable to BISHOPS GREEN or GRADE 2 than any of their countrymen from days gone by. This is decidedly un-gnarly. All songs in English. Fat production with bubbly bass lines, songs about general revolution. Perfect for holding yer beer and doing the trout. Peeee-yaaas!

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ON THE ROPES – demo: From the forgotten province of Alberta (North Montana) ON THE ROPES sketch out three great tracks of scrappy and sincere Oi! Elements of STAMFORD BRIDGE and the BRASS shine thru. Themes are classic and delivered in a manner that sidesteps weary cliché and shows why Oi! is true working class punk. Affix yer gaze on this serious citation: "*Feels like there's no way out / Nothing you can do / Run from your problems / But they'll always catch up to you / There's a time to run / And there's a time to fight / When it all goes down / You gotta give it all your might.*" That's from "On the Ropes." "Where We Belong" is a love letter to salad days and the steaky nights to come. "On My Own" deals with a soured friendship: "*Make nice until you get what you need / Driven by selfishness and greed / I won't fall for it again, you can fuck right off!*" No word if there's a tape or not, but you can get the songs from their Bandcamp page—Ontheropesoi.bandcamp.com—for a price of your choosing. Even cheap beer is expensive in Canada so go throw them some bones. Recommended!

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ROADSIDE BOMBS – *Rise Up* LP (Pirates Press): My cynicism gets the best of me sometimes. It's an ugly trait and I'd probably be happier if I could let it go for good. But! Not! Right! Now! Gah! *Rise Up* is fer sure a street punk (yech!) record outta the North Bay / Sonoma. Musically it's a shiny cousin to other booted Bay Area bands WORKIN STIFFS', RANDUMBS, the FORGOTTEN. The singer was in the BODIES right? Try doing research on a band named "ROADSIDE BOMBS." 50% gruesome bummer 100% of the time. Anyway, the singer is a singing machine. He sounds similar to homeboy from the STAGGERS or like if DANZIG was a Democrat (not a sex-imp). And this shit is DNC approved. Or I don't know. See? Cynical. I'll say this, *Rise Up* is topical. And I appreciate that. You got a couple anti-Trump songs, a pro-immigrant / foreign worker tune. A song against slut shaming. They take on homophobia and class struggle. Racial hatred is given the boot. Some of it's eyeroll inducing (similar to the NEWTOWN NEUROTICS...or all folk punk) but it's better than a band railing against amorphous "others."

The star of the album is the Bruce Roehrs tribute song, "Best of the Best," which along with "45 RPM" was released on a picture disc single. It's a solid tune that makes plain the band's love and gratitude towards their missed friend. Back in the day I wasn't so much a fan of *Maximum Rocknroll* as I was a fan of Roehrs' column. His taste and writing style (which I ape, duh) left a lasting impression on me. So great was his connection in my brain to Oi! and "skinhead shit" that his column picture was tuned into a 1" pin that I wore on my flight until it rusted off (Arwen Curry was also turned into a pin just becuz).

All in, I don't know the intended audience for this LP. Dad skins? Friends and lovers of the band? Fans of American-Oi.com? People who want a liberal Facebook feed manifested in soft-streetpunk? If you qualify for any of these groups, give it a whirl.

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WERGILD – demo: I got hip to WERGILD by a buddy who told me they were "kind of Oi!" Well, kind of Oi! is enough to pique my interest. And bam! WERGILD got me floored. It's a demo so the rawness is a given but it's charming as fuck. If BATTLE RUINS was a drill sergeant screaming at EEL to get their shit together the product after ten weeks of bootcamp might be WERGILD. Song titles are sick as well: "Where Old Gods Rule," "American Wake," "Only Winter," and "Æsahættr." With references to the *His Dark Materials* trilogy, Beowulf and *A Song of Ice and Fire* I'm sold on many levels. When the solo on "Æsahættr" kicks in get ready to ride the thermals! Ric Flair said it best, "Woooo!" (I will quote Ric Flair again). Get a copy of the tape for $3 at Wergild.bandcamp.com. Good job Baltimore!

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We're done! We did it! No column next month as I'll be out driving across America in the Ranger headed to Oakland, CA to see thee mighty TEMPLARS. I've jinxed it enough times already so I'm sure my truck will explode somewhere east of the Rockies and I'll have to revert back to my oogle past and hop a train or flag down Large Marge. One way or another I'm making the show. Till then, play nice!

NONOTES:

Point me towards more music I can erroneously classify as "Oi!" I can be spammed at: AmericanBootGang@Gmail.com

OVERAMPED
HARM REDUCTION FOR THE MODERN WORLD

People Who Have Died

I didn't have a lot of time this month to write something that was gonna be very research intensive. We had our annual overdose vigil at work last week and a lot of my time and emotional energy was channeled towards that. The tradition of The Annual Overdose Vigil has come to be like a somber New Year's Eve party in the past couple of years. A real fucking macabre party, where everyone gets together and muses on what we lost this year, what we could have done better, what we plan to do better. And I swear everyone and their mother is hosting their own vigil now. I've been invited to five in the past month. It's exhausting.

We tried to spin this year's memorial and focus on the lives we have saved, not just those we have lost. There's something missing from the national dialogue about this "epidemic." Well I mean there are a lot of things missing but the one I am referring to is the tenacity of drug users themselves. The overwhelming majority of overdoses that are reversed are done so not by medical professionals, but by other drug users. Because of the pervasiveness of Narcan in the past few years, many overdoses aren't even reported if they don't result in a death. Just like any other subculture or alternative economy, drug users learn to circumvent the systems that don't serve them, and innovate new survival techniques when faced with no other reasonable choices.

Anyway, I had been thinking a lot about people who have died and how it feels like I haven't been able to rally the time or emotional energy to properly grieve a lot of them. So I decided to do something I've been meaning to do for a while. The following are obituaries that I've written for a few people I knew, the way I knew them. All names have been changed for obvious reasons.

Eric: Eric was the first person I knew through the Exchange who died. Words fail when it comes to describing Eric; he was nothing if not candid and he had what I inexpertly surmise to be a very severe case of

ADHD—it made him come off as childlike. I called him "fast Eric" because he was always wheeling and dealing and every single thought that popped into his mind was communicated with the rhythm and cadence of a seasoned auctioneer. Other people called him Adderall Eric. He was short and awkward but it didn't slow him down at all. He wasn't loyal to any specific substance—half the time he was drunk as a skunk, some days he actually took the Adderall that he so desperately needed, and he rarely used dope. He usually appeared to be cracked the fuck out, but I think that was just the natural baseline he spent his whole life trying to mitigate. Sometimes it was actual crack though.

When he was drunk he loved to talk about his life to anyone who would listen. A woman named Rebecca was a constant fixture in these stories, she wasn't the woman he married but the love of his life and she had overdosed at least ten years prior to me meeting him. Rebecca's death was the single most defining event of Eric's life. She remains a bit of a mystery to me, but I would have loved to meet the yin to this dude's yang.

When he wasn't drinking he was almost coherent. His taste in music varied as widely as his taste in substances. Every single day he would come in, hover over the computer and blast whatever "classic" song he was feeling that day. Usually something like Judas Priest or AC/DC or worse, Sugar Ray, Dave Matthews Band, or early '90s R&B. Every single day I would ask him to turn it down, or depending on the song, turn it off altogether. He usually acquiesced but gave me grief about being a hardass. He once gave me a Christmas card that had more words on it than I thought possible to squeeze onto a 5x7 piece of cardstock and it was completely incomprehensible. I still take it out and look it over when I need to laugh. Here is an excerpt, "I love how you help care me know your hot still have a heart of gold me I love you wow I really appreciate your suport ns your more wild I so I'm ready to love learn grow me more in on recept no love sex ns r ride pushes passion to the limit me you could be mine ns a teacher I student with now but ?"

Mark: Mark was Eric's best friend. He spent almost every day in the drop-in. Mark was a ball-buster, through-and-through. Just like Eric, he was entrepreneurial, always supplementing his government income with side hustles. He had walking pneumonia for something like a year, but he continued to shoot cocaine 'til he died. He went through a phase of asking me out to lunch every single day and he was so tickled to hear me tell him every single time that he couldn't afford me.

One time he brought a taser into the drop-in and showed it to someone. It made a little *zap* noise. When we told him he couldn't bring weapons into the exchange he got real agitated and insisted it wasn't a taser, but a bug zapper. He got so aggro about it that he threatened a staff member and we had to ask him to leave for a week or a month or something. He maintained that it was a bug zapper long after the rest of us had dropped the issue, until what turned out to be almost his dying day. I guess he wanted to get it off his chest or impress me or something because he told me the item in question was indeed a taser all along.

I also happen to know that he broke into our space by propping open a window with a piece of wood before the drop-in closed for the day. He came back later that night to steal our brand new flat screen TV. This was years ago, before flat screens were standard. He never got caught and it was before I worked there. One time some other people helped me to break into his apartment building because they said someone was overdosing upstairs and they needed us. Everyone who lived there was there on a voucher so calling 911 to report an overdose would mean risking their homes. Once we got in there we couldn't find anyone so we left but he found out about it and god was he pissed. He screamed at me that he was going to sue me but I think he just needed to get it out of his system because he never brought it up again and commenced trying to win me over by the next week. Mark was a ball-buster, he was a furtive hustler, he was often a pain in the ass, but he was also smart and charming.

Tiffany: Tiffany was a loveable, loving, and at times jolly person who was everyone's best friend and the subject of constant concern. Tiffany was 47 years old and she was an alcoholic if I ever met one. She'd had really bad cirrhosis since I met her three years ago and her stomach was constantly distended because of her liver disease. At times it got so bad that she appeared pregnant. One time she got so swollen that she had to get a ring sawed off her hand so she could get surgery. She lived on the street for years, through the cold northeast winters. I don't know how she did it. She had a lot of run-ins and a lot of bad nights on the street. I always thought it must take so much damn energy for her just to get up in the morning.

She was always quick to tell people how much they meant to her, but for some reason she was always losing her voice. She couldn't speak above a whisper most of the time. About a year ago, I ran into her on the street after not seeing her for a while. She had been staying at a shelter a couple dozen miles north of here trying to get clean. She got kicked out of that shelter a few times, but her mom was friends with the person who ran it so she got more chances there than most. That time I ran into her was the last time I saw her, she hugged me and told me she loved me probably no less than ten times. She introduced me as her friend to anyone who would listen and told them how much she loved me and all of the people at the Exchange and how much we had helped her. She encouraged all of her friends that were not already members to become members, despite the fact that they didn't inject drugs. Then she took my hand and forced me to dance with her to a Led Zeppelin song that some guy was strumming on the guitar on the sidewalk. I was relieved to hear that her mother was with her when she died in the hospital rather than freezing to death on the street like I was always afraid she would.

JR: JR spent most of his life in prison for robbing banks, stores, and bingo halls. He was infamous for wearing a clown mask during robberies. While he was in jail in the mid-'80s, he contracted HIV. He told me how it happened; it was just before anyone was talking about the virus, or at least before he knew about it. He told me about how they used to pass around a homemade needle with a plastic tube attached to it to shoot dope. It would make the rounds back and forth between every cell. He said that he remembers seeing dried blood caked into the needle but shooting it anyway. As far as he knew he was gonna be in prison his whole life anyway so what's the difference? He was about 6'3" and couldn't have weighed more than 120 lbs. He looked hollow. He was 60 when he died but looked like he could have easily been 80. He had dementia. One time I walked up to him on the sidewalk while he was being questioned by five cops about a recent ATM robbery. He vaguely fit the description of the suspect. I walked up to this happening and realized he had no idea what was going on because when they told him about the robbery he literally said "No way, that's crazy. What a coincidence, I used to rob banks too!" I'm glad I was there to intervene that time.

People were fiercely protective of him and most of the time he had no idea. He was very gentle but liked a good thrill. In his younger life he was a skateboarder and a unicycler. This is how his sister remembered him: "He broke out of prison several times. One time, while racing down the interstate on the run in a stolen car, he pulled over to help a woman change her flat tire." He just couldn't leave her there. That is who he was. There was an inmate who was a grandfather and always talked about his grandkids. JR had me write a children's story and send it to a tattoo artist inside for illustrations. He sent all the pages back so I could make a book. JR knew the grandchild's birthday was approaching and the grandfather had no way of sending a gift. He knew what it would mean to both the grandfather and grandchild. He asked me to send extra stamps and stationery because a young inmate wanted to take his life. JR said he couldn't tell the kid what he could or couldn't do but that it wouldn't be fair not to write his mom a letter and at least give her some closure."

Last winter, when things were getting really tough and he was getting kicked out of the shelter for things beyond his control over and over again, one of our staff went to his payee to get him some money and them took him shopping for a tent, a lantern, and some other camping supplies. He lost all of the supplies within one day. This happened every time he got something new. He got off of probation just weeks before he died—the first time he had not been court-involved in 36 years. He came back to the drop-in and gave everyone he saw a high-five and told them he was finally free. He said "I've never been a free man before, you guys are the best."

I heard him say over and over again that all he wanted was a room with a bed and a TV so he could die peacefully. JR had never had an address of his own as an adult. His lengthy record made it almost impossible for our staff to help him find housing. The day JR finally found out that he was getting a room at the Y was probably the happiest day of many of our recent lives. He hung out in the drop-in all day and I watched him cry again and again and again as he told each person who came in that he was finally getting housed. His dementia wouldn't allow him to remember who he had already told so this process went on for days. I can't believe how many people I saw cry tears of joy for him. One of our staff took him shopping for furniture and helped him to set up his room at the Y. We found a TV for him and went over to his room repeatedly to help him troubleshoot his remote control. Even after he was housed, he still chose to spend every day with us in the exchange. He lost 6 pairs of keys in his first month of living at the Y. He got sepsis and died of AIDS a few weeks ago. JR was the fucking best and I'm glad I got to know him before he died. His memorial service is this weekend.

Chris: Came from some rural area west of the city. He was young and tame. He was a quintessential nerd who liked anime, the *Star Wars* series, video games, and the *His Dark Materials* series. If we ever ran out of milk or sugar he would run to 7-Eleven and buy us a bunch to keep in the exchange. He loved animals. He loved having a job. He hated being bored and dependent. He was impressionable and hung out with people that you would think he had absolutely nothing in common with. He had a bunch of long stints of sobriety and he was really proud to be sober, when he was.

He moved away for a while or was in a program or something. Two of my co-workers saw him on the train two weeks before he died. He said he hadn't been coming around because he had gotten sober and he didn't want to tempt fate by hanging around his old haunts. He was wearing a suit, on his way to a temp job, and he was so fucking elated to see them. He said he was doing great, he was working, and he missed us all very much. I went searching for him on Facebook to help jog my memory of him for this obit. His last couple of posts were about getting clean, some pictures of horses, him doing construction work, and the results of a quiz entitled "how and when you will die." He overdosed and died a few weeks after posting that. He was 29 years old.

Jose: Jose was a quiet and warm person who was known for being level-headed. He grew up with JR and another one of our members, Sugar. Sugar was a few years older than him. He told us all about their meet cute when they lived in the same neighborhood as kids. Sugar was a teenager who had just held up a store and pulled up to his street in a stolen car. Jose was eleven years old at the time and was an unassuming lookout. He knew the cops were coming before anyone else. He went right up to Sugar's house, knocked on the door, and told him the cops were on their way. Sugar said they had never talked before. Jose and his group of eleven year old bandits got in the stolen car, put it in neutral and steered it to the back of the house where Sugar was waiting for them. Sugar made it out and was on the lam for a good six months before the law caught up with him.

Jose was mild-mannered yet eloquent. He would frequently show up looking sharp in business suits and carrying briefcases. I honestly don't know what the fuck he was doing out there in the world, but after he died I learned he had a number of different lives. He grew up with JR and watched out for him like an older brother, though he looked at least thirty years younger. He had jobs doing construction, working with kids, and in IT. Jose was an occasional user and he never appeared to be high or really anything other than his best, sweet, quiet self. He had two kids and ten siblings. I never knew that he had been married or had kids until his estranged wife showed up at the Exchange to tell us he had died.

Petey: I did not like Petey. He scared the shit out of me. He was in his 30s. I met him for the first time the day he got out of jail. He was really intense, a fast talker, and quick to escalate any situation. He was rarely in control of himself. Plus, he was prison-jacked. He creeped me out a little bit. He started getting his mail sent to our office after he got out of jail because he didn't have another address. He tried to get checks sent, SSI or something, even though I had told him many times that he couldn't use our address to have money sent here. He was due to get a check one week on a Monday. He kept calling the agency that supposedly sent it, and they maintained that they had, so every day he would come in more and more determined to get it, even though we didn't have it because they never sent it. Every day of this particular week he got more and more aggressive and persistent until Friday, by then he had fatigued every ounce of self-control and just completely lost it when I told him that the mail hadn't come in yet. He started yelling at me unrelentingly. He shoved past me through to the main office and just ran around basically screaming, looking for someone to fight like if got one clean punch in it he would be an instant thousandaire. Someone else finally calmed him down. I think he just needed to hear that the mail wasn't in yet from anyone else other than me because at this point he was convinced I was just out to get him and he was running through the office saying as much. I've watched plenty of people become detached when rage takes them over, but it was the first time in a few years that I felt like I was the subject of that fury and it scared me. The next week he came in like none of it ever happened, and I believe that he believed nothing out of the ordinary had happened. He was never nice to me and was a crude misogynist. A few months after that incident, his body was found in the back of a U-Haul truck. He overdosed and died alone. His body wasn't found for days. I thought it was crazy how this big tough guy who wasn't afraid of anything could be taken down out by such a small thing. Just a few grains of Fentanyl. After he died, I initially felt guilty for not liking him, but I don't anymore.

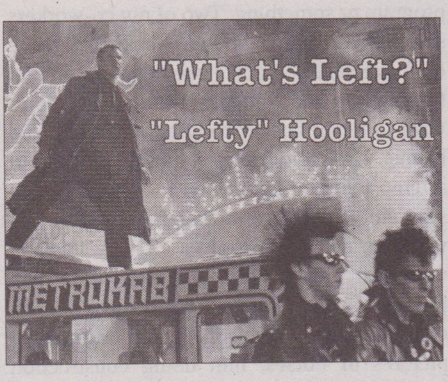
Sam: Sam had the bluest eyes I have ever seen. He was one of those people I think you would call conventionally handsome. He was always sort of grounded, never out of control, never nodding out. He was one of those guys that normal people would not believe was homeless. He was a sweet guy and he was capable, he took care of other people's problems. He overdosed and was in coma for at least a month before he died. I found it ironic and sad that he had never used drugs until his late 30s when he met his second wife. Once he finally died, she got a dog and got clean.

Linda: Linda was a force to be reckoned with, and she knew how to work the system to get what she needed. Her fiery determination was known to cause some friction around the space. She was a heartbreaker. Last fall when she was getting out of jail after a two month stint, a guy came into the drop-in saying, "I'm really excited, my girlfriend is getting out of jail today" and told us about how he had found them a place to live and the money he had saved up for her. A few minutes after he left, another member walked in and said "I'm really excited today, my girlfriend's getting out of jail..." When Linda did finally come back to the drop in, she showed us a letter from yet another suitor who was waiting for her release.

She was the mother of three kids and a former hairdresser. I knew all about each one of her kids and her love life. One summer she met this rich guy on the street. He had just inherited a bunch of money, like $50,000. He didn't use heroin and I don't think he knew that she did. I didn't see her that often that summer but she came by again in the fall to tell me they spent all of the money on blow and dope in just three months. I wasn't sure if I believed her that they could "blow" through all that cash so quickly but I never alluded to her that I thought so. She insisted on showing me bank statements though and came back with them a month later and it was true. The last time I saw her, she was pleading with a shelter worker on the phone to let her back in because she had been kicked out for getting high but she swore she wasn't nodding out, she was just tired. She was literally nodding out as she had this phone conversation and the woman on the other end must've been calling her on it because she kept yelling "I'm not high right now, my grandmother just died and I have been crying. I'm really upset." She must have had a lot of grandmas because I have heard her use this excuse on at least five separate incidents prior to this one.

I realized I had never been to a Catholic ceremony prior to Linda's death. I didn't even know that I knew her mother, and that I had vaguely known her for years until after the funeral when we were leaving and she said "it means so much to me that you came." I loved Linda. She wasn't alone when she died. She was with people who were supposed to be taking care of her and they failed her.

So there's a few people who have died. Not an exhaustive list, but representative of complicated, smart, frustrating, caring, beautiful normal people all very different from one another. All had different habits, different desires. They all died too young but I suppose that's how it goes these days. I wish that when annual vigil time rolls around next year that there are less candles to light, but the world doesn't appear to be heading in that direction. Here's hoping. HMU @ dearauntiehazel@gmail.com



I fancy myself a "citizen of the world," but I'm merely a denizen of these United States of America. As such I feel obliged to oppose US imperialism and seek to dismantle the American empire. But that doesn't make me an "anti-imperialist." To quote Gilles Dauvé: "I am against imperialism, be it French, British, US, or Chinese. I am not an 'anti-imperialist', since that is a political position supporting national liberation movements opposed to imperialist powers."

For me, part of not being a dyed-in-the-wool vulgar Leninist anti-imperialist despite opposing imperialism "objectively" everywhere is focusing primarily on my country's imperialist exploitation and appropriation around the world. I really don't spend much time or energy railing against, for instance, either Russian imperialism or Israeli imperialism.

Russia is a US rival, and sometime enemy, that has imperialized Georgia, Chechnya, Ukraine, etc., while Israel is a US ally and client state that has imperialized the West Bank and parts of Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. Those military and economic encroachments are only secondarily my concern as I am currently focused on US saber rattling in East Asia (Korea) and South America (Venezuela).

There can be extenuating circumstances of course. I am Polish by family origin so when Russia recently threatened Poland over the removal of WWII Soviet-era statues I took notice. My wife is a Jewish "red diaper baby" and she has a consistently anti-Zionist take on Israel. But we don't spend every minute of every hour of every day denouncing respectively Russian or Israeli imperialism.

What's more, I suspect that my fellow American netizens who spend all their time and energy condemning Russian imperialism or Israeli imperialism have ulterior motives. In the case of Russia it's Cold War anti-communism and in the case of Israel it's old fashioned anti-semitism. Long associated with right-wing politics, anti-communism and anti-semitism are more and more products of the Left.

Anti-imperialism is one of those unifying principles common to Leftist organizations and movements. From the Black Panther Party's Ten-Point Program to more generic points of unity, an ideological laundry list is *de rigueur* for the left. Classical anarchism remained largely aloof from this requirement until the rise of the New Left in the 1960s. The practice of formulating points of unity as a programmatic norm and organizing method eventually became part-and-parcel of anarchist organizations and movements generally as they incorporated elements of New Left and old Left politics, an argument post-left anarchists are fond of making. As for the ultra-left, we've tended to make each point in any list of basic positions a thorough treatise worthy of its own volume of *Capital*. Anti-fascism is yet another unifying Leftist principle.

We'd planned to go to Crissy Field to confront the Patriot Prayer fascists on August 26 when the whole Bay Area was mobilizing despite cancelled bus lines, locked down militarized neighborhoods, unnerving uncertainties, and real physical dangers. There was a lot of political pressure for the National Parks Department to cancel the permit, which didn't happen, even as other similar provocations around the country were shut down. The overwhelming media coverage of the proposed event guaranteed that the Bay Area Left showed up in force on Saturday.

Other protest events had been planned nearby, such as the SF LovedUp Mobile Dance Counter-Rally just down the bay at Marina Green Park. And lots of folks thought the best strategy was to avoid Crissy Field altogether for symbolic anti-fash events elsewhere. Me, I think it's always necessary to confront fascism directly. So when Patriot Prayer cancelled their rally the night before and it was clear Joey Gibson had flown the coop the morning of, I was relieved and elated, but also disappointed. Things had changed from directly confronting real live fascists to symbolically protesting the rise of fascism, and I'd done enough symbolic protesting during my last half century of leftist politics thank you. So while I was glad, I only briefly attended the largely celebratory demonstrations at Alamo Square and then the Castro, and I didn't care to march down Market Street yet one more time. Truth be told, while I was happy San Francisco had repelled the fascists through our mobilization, the symbolic mass demonstrations that followed were a bit of a letdown.

Leave it to Berkeley to set the standard for directly confronting the fash, when a demonstration of 7,000 anti-fascist protesters marched on MLK / Civic Center Park, with 500 embedded black clad Antifa overwhelming the police and taking over the park on Sunday, August 27.

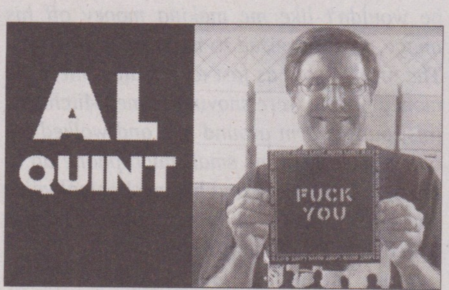
I'd intended to demonstrate in San Francisco as an unaffiliated leftist against fascism, not as Antifa. For one thing I'm 65 years old, take blood thinners, and have bad knees. I'd stopped the blood thinners days before in case I got hit upside the head by a rogue nazi. But I was there to demonstrate against, not to fight the fash, so I wasn't going to be on the front lines. I admire Antifa and their stated strategy to confront fascism everywhere with direct action. I post a lot of pro-Antifa stuff on my facebook profile. But I also hold to a diversity of strategies (per Doug Henwood of *The Nation*), where "some of us are fighters, some of us organizers—and some of us like to write about history, theory, and the current conjuncture." I was never good at the "boring hard slog of organizing" and I'm too old for "street-based politics." So now I kibbitz from the sidelines and go to demonstrations and protest against fascism.

Notice I didn't say I was antifascist. I have Gilles Dauvé's reservations of liberal anti-fascism: "I am (and so is the proletariat) against fascism, be it in the form of Hitler or Le Pen. I am not an 'anti-fascist,' since this is a political position regarding the fascist state or threat as a first and foremost enemy to be destroyed at all costs, i.e. siding with bourgeois democrats as a lesser evil, and postponing revolution until fascism is disposed of." Antifa suffers from a similar political monomania, tempered only by its emphasis on direct action and it's *de facto* anarchism.

And I have criticisms of Antifa's direct action and default anarchism as well. Militarily speaking, the decentralized black bloc tactic might work well as cat-and-mouse with the cops, but it's more like brutal gang warfare against alt-right paramilitary formations. It lacks the capacity to scale up to higher levels of organization, logistics, and mobility, so I think Antifa needs to investigate other historic antifascist modes of self-defense such as militias and commando operations.

I have the usual ultra-left critique of anarchism, but for now I think that Antifa's implied goal of anarchism is so far removed from its tactics and strategy as to be useless. To understand my point, consider the goal of democratic socialism held by orthodox social democracy. To achieve that goal, social democrats usually put forward parallel political party and labor union mass strategies out of which spring myriad tactics—education and propaganda, electioneering and organizing, shadow governments and mass strikes, etc. Rules of engagement are derived from one's strategies and measures of success from the outcome of one's tactics. By contrast, Antifa has a single strategy—stop the fash—which produces limited tactics—education, doxxing, direct action. Strategy and tactics are so immediate and narrow as to have virtually no direct connection to any stated or implied goal of anarchism. Frankly, I don't see how one leads to the other except for the usual cliché that Antifa's means and ends are identical.

I'm critical of anti-imperialism even while I'm against imperialism. I have criticisms of anti-fascism and Antifa even while I'm against fascism. Similarly, I have problems with most anti-capitalist and anti-colonialist stances even while I'm against capitalism and colonialism. I like to think my political critiques are well-reasoned and not simply a product of my characteristic devil's advocacy or my knee-jerk contrarianism, as expressed by Groucho Marx and the Ramones when they sang: *"I'm against it!"*



REMEMBERING THE RAT

I have a flyer Wall of Honor next to my desk, advertising shows going as far back as 1983. The oldest one is the infamous Charles Manson flyer for when NEGATIVE FX opened one of MISSION OF BURMA's final gigs at the Bradford Hotel Ballroom (now Royale). You might recognize the image from the Taang Records posthumous album of NEGATIVE FX recordings. That was quite a show! A snippet of it was captured on the final track, where the plug was pulled on them while playing "Might Makes Right" (later done by SLAPSHOT). Contrary to what's been written in a few places, NEGATIVE FX got to play pretty much their entire set, despite the mayhem that ensued from the first song, with the Boston Crew people diving on top of patrons not used to such hardcore shenanigans.

It might seem like an odd combination, with NEGATIVE FX opening for the more art-punk Burma (post-punk band DANGEROUS BIRDS were also on the bill) but it was a time where there was diversity on some of the bills. And the Burma guys were definitely fans of the early Boston hardcore bands. Anyway, that flyer deserves a spot on the Wall of Honor, as do ones advertising CRUCIFIX, BLACK FLAG, POISON IDEA, NINE SHOCKS TERROR, DSB and, more recently, CRAZY SPIRIT and HANK WOOD & THE HAMMERHEADS. I've also got two huge boxes of flyers sitting in my storage closet.

One of those flyers is from November 15, 1997. This flyer advertised the final show at the legendary Boston club the Rathskeller, better known as the Rat. The bands were STRATFORD MERCENARIES (with Steve Ignorant from CRASS), AUS-ROTTEN, the UNSEEN and a few more. I remember it being a rager and feeling sad as I headed up the stairs and took one final look at this room where I had seen so many great bands.

The club had actually been around as a nightclub since the '60s, when it was known as TJ's for a time and reverted back to the Rat name in 1974. It was located in Kenmore Square, around the corner from Fenway Park. Kenmore was seedy and scary at that time and gradually became gentrified and sanitized, which I'll get to. It had "charactah," as we say in Massachusetts English.

The Rat became ground zero for Boston's burgeoning underground rock scene. There was a double disc *Live At The Rat* album on Rat Records (of course). There were kickass early performances by the REAL KIDS, DMZ, WILLIE "LOCO" ALEXANDER and THUNDERTRAIN (who were more of a hard rock band and whose vocalist Mach Bell later played with Joe Perry from AEROSMITH). The label later released two singles by the NERVOUS EATERS. The second, *Just Head / Get Stuffed*, is one of the best punk discs to ever come out of Boston. They were never as good after that.

I heard about this place and when I started at Boston University, in the fall of '78, I knew I had to go into *"Boston's most intense underground dwelling...that subterranean cavern of lurid vice and gla-mour known as the Rat..."* That was punk DJ Oedipus's introduction on the *Live At The Rat* album. Oedi, born Eddie Hyson, was the first punk DJ in Boston, on the MIT station WTBS, which changed its call letters to WMBR when Ted Turner bought them for his Turner Broadcasting System. Oedipus's show, The Demimonde, was must-listening every Saturday afternoon. He even had cool music for his concert reports—the REAL KIDS doing a cover of LINK WRAY's "Rawhide."

Last month, I mentioned the first punk show I went to at the Rat, with the PLASMATICS and the MOLLS. But I didn't mention how that show wasn't my first time there. I first entered the club in the fall of '78 with a high school friend visiting for the weekend. The drinking age was 18 and so it was possible to go to clubs. At this Rat show, we saw a wretched Springsteen-esque band, the STOMPERS, which was far from punk, which is why I refuse to call that my first punk show. The band later gained some popularity, signed to a major label and you can probably find their records in a dollar bin somewhere.

So, for the next 19 years, I went to shows at the Rat. Night shows, all-ages shows later on, all kinds of shows and a wide variety of bands. While it had a rep as a punk club, the Rat booked lots of different bands over the years, everything from punk to hardcore to metal to post-punk to pop. I'd fill up this and the next few columns just listing them but some were the EFFIGIES, HÜSKER DÜ, WIPERS, REM, MINUTEMEN, BIG BLACK, SONIC YOUTH, BL'AST, FLESH EATERS, SLAPSHOT, GOO GOO DOLLS (in their punk days, before they turned in top 40 swill), DESCENDENTS, JAWBREAKER and even MEGADETH, just before *Peace Sells* came out. I saw just about all of the classic Boston hardcore bands there.

I also have a list of bands I *wish* I'd seen there. I missed the ZERO BOYS, in late '80 or early '81, around the time their 7" came out. I missed METALLICA *opening* for RAVEN! I was too cheap to cough up $7.50. *Fuck*! I blew my chance to see the POLICE, who played a few nights there in the fall of '78. By the time they came back the following April, to play the larger Paradise, "Roxanne" had become a hit and tickets sold out well in advance. I never got to see them play at all, in fact. As insufferable as STING has become (always was, probably), I still stand by those first two albums.

The club did have a rep for nasty bouncers. When they started doing some all-ages show in 1982, there was a show with MISSION OF BURMA and the PROLETARIAT. I reviewed it in the second issue of my zine and said the the club *"maintained its reputation for having the most mentally deranged and fucked-up bouncers in any music establishment in Boston."* I imagine that could have also applied to the Channel, a much bigger place with alleged mob ties. But some people started "slamming," as I called it in the review and the bouncers stopped the kids and said it wasn't allowed. Things got ugly late in the show and there was a bit of a brawl and Clint from MISSION OF BURMA said "we don't think kids should pay four bucks to get beaten up." I also alluded to the fact that the club had been shut down for three weeks prior to that due to bouncer incidents. Anyway, by the time the next all-ages show happened at the Rat, with the EFFIGIES, they did allow dancing and removed all the tables and chairs. Unfortunately, according to the same issue of my zine, when the WIPERS played there after that, the bouncers once again went into attack mode. And so it went…

In spite of those rough situations at times, I never really had any problems there except for the time I saw YOUTH OF TODAY around '89 or so (it may have even been SHELTER. I just know it was one of Ray Cappo's bands) and someone broke into my car on the street behind the club and boosted around 50 tapes, including many irreplaceable demos and mixtapes. I made jokes about how, since I'd criticized the spiritual content of Ray's bands, maybe it was some sort of karma but I think I'll just leave that alone.

I also have to mention Mitch Cerullo, the manager and doorman at the club for years, with his silver hair and impeccable three piece suit. He had also had a laryngectomy, where they removed his voice box and he had to use a device to talk. Sadly, he passed away in '95. He was only in his early 60s. He was an imposing figure and a friend once told me that Mitch packed heat when he was working there. There were even t-shirts made in his honor. T. Max from *The Noise* zine wrote, *"I was afraid he wouldn't like me making money off his image, so I promised to make only 24 shirts. The first 24 sold as fast as I could collect the money people were shoving at me. Mitch saw this, put his arm around me, and walked me outside. He held his small microphone up to the hole in his neck and his mechanical voice spoke the words, 'I respect your business endeavors. Make more T-shirts.'"*

More memories? GG ALLIN with the JABBERS, before his disgustoid era, where the most outrageous things he did were spray the audience with beer and hang from the pipes. We checked it out after a DOA show got canceled at a bigger club. Interviewing GBH, upstairs from the bar, where we were eating some tasty BBQ and Jock, their guitarist, put some greens on my plate, saying *"'ere—it'll put 'air on yer chest."* Out behind the club, I interviewed the guys from SHEER TERROR in a car and it was one of the most non-PC and hilarious ones I've ever done. Even when they said things 180 degrees opposed from my beliefs, I was in stitches. Their inimitable vocalist Paul Bearer referred to Al Sharpton as a *"fat Barry White lookalike"* and also said that Spike Lee looked like a frog. I mean, you really had to be there but I can still hear Paul pontificating with that New York accent of his. I interviewed David Sims and Brett Bradford from SCRATCH ACID and a real rat actually scurried near us while we were in the back parking lot. In the same lot, I hung out with Jerry A from POISON IDEA, who put away a fifth of Jack Daniels to no noticeable effect. He'd promised me a shirt when they came to town but they ran out and so he reached into his suitcase and gave me one of his own shirts. It's never even fit me right but it will never leave my possession. It means more than any standard band shirt. I'm sure other people have much crazier stories about the Rat than I do. I've never been a partier and the Rat wasn't a place I'd go just to drink. The bands were the attraction for me.

In all honesty, this place was a pit, a classic seedy dive club but its history is undeniable. I was just reading an interview with the club's owner Jim Harold and he talked about the club getting flooded. I remember that happening during a TAD show there around 1990—the toilets exploded! They made everyone go upstairs, pumped out some and once things seemed to be OK, we were allowed to go back downstairs. I don't even want to *know* what I stepped in that night. After another flood, someone came up with the brilliant idea to put kitty litter on the floor. You can imagine what happened when people started dancing during a KISS IT GOODBYE show there. I was blowing black snot for a few days after that one.

So the Rat closed and the decimation of Kenmore Square was already underway. A record store, Planet, got burnt out of its space a few doors down before the Rat's demise. Other cool restaurants and shops gave way to chains. Eventually, the entire block where the Rat existed was bulldozed for the disgusting, gaudy Hotel Commonwealth, catering to rich fuckers visiting their obnoxious college student spawn infecting the area. Besides the Rat and Planet, that block also had the Pizza Pad, Nemo's, an army / navy store and Charlie's Cafeteria, which later become an iHop that pretty much blew. There were other clubs, including Storyville, which operated for a short time in the '80s. In that same building was the legendary Radiobeat studio where many great bands recorded, including SSD, DYS, the PROLETARIAT and many more.

It's all gone now. Safer, I suppose. More "family friendly," as the whole Kenmore / Fenway area has become. Lots of high-rises with expensive condos going up, skyrocketing ticket prices to the baseball game, when you can get them or don't mind taking out a second mortgage. Chain restaurants like Uno's, Bertucci's and McDonald's. Just like anywhere else. They've even cleaned up the subway station, building a fancy new entrance way. Ah well, at least the huge Citgo sign, corporate emblem or not, remains perched atop 636 Beacon Street, as it has since the mid-'60s, and acts as a beacon to draw you to Kenmore. Trouble is there ain't that much to draw me there anymore. It's just like anywhere else. And that's a pity...

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MOM, LOOK, I'M IN A MAGAZINE!!
GUEST COLUMN
SEX
PiSTOL
B
C

Intuitive astrology from your friendly local neighborhood astro creep hater, Crystal Mistress.

***

ARIES: What I'm gonna need from y'all this month is to not let Mars rule your junk via a false sense of love (it's just lust for you) that is damaging to another human. You'll be disillusioned after you smash anyway. Don't sweep them up in the romance then just bounce. Let your ego go and take the selflessness route. I know that's hard for you baby, especially in these trying times of Scorpio season. But for once Aries, it's not about you (or your orgasm).

***

TAURUS: OK, we get it Taurus, you want to just chill out and cozy up in bed. We love you for it but right now let's get out there and "grab life by the horns." It's time to let out the sensual energy into anything other than cuddling your pillow. Let that slow burn love you've got stored up out and about this month. Consider pretending you're a fire sign if that helps y'all get the fuck up. We're all depressed, but this month is not the time to let yourself indulge too deeply. Go back to Netflix in bed next year.

***

GEMINI: Can y'all just decide if you love or hate someone already? We don't need any of your back and forth between bestie and enemy this month, babes. Your duality right now is coming off as indecisive as a Libra's (not a good look). So boss up with your fur on and give 'em your all or your boot. And please give everyone a break on your swiping this month. I would even consider celibacy.

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CANCER: My sweet, poor, cryin' ass, baby angel Cancers. Please just for one month don't make it be about your feelings and your feelings alone. Sometimes you might use emotions as a means to control via condescension about understanding feelings more than everyone else, which puts us deep in the watery realm this month. Don't let them be your weapon this month...it's too easy.

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LEO: OK Leo, yes, you're hot. We know, we always will know, but let's get a little more esoteric in how we flaunt the goods this month. Less is more right now, especially in your seduction styles. Give us a chance to catch up, boo! Make us know you're hot without knowing you're trying to make us know. Give us a little bit of the cat who hides in the shadows and *then* shows out.

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VIRGO: You really aren't as organized as y'all think. This month will be complete chaos if you truly believe the calendar is on lock (newsflash: it never is). Just go on and *try* to chill because you don't gotta be everyone's mamas and sometimes no one asks for you to be. It's hard to not make breakfast in the morning for everyone, but I promise the world won't fall apart. You're feeding all of our anxiety, but mostly just yours.

***

LIBRA: It's time to really look at you and your last year, Libra. Did you learn from your mistakes and expand? Or are y'all still snaking around playing the victim for your own fuck ups and fallacies? Did y'all learn how to be better friends yet or will you always selfishly believe no one is good enough for your love when you are just projecting your self-hate? Judge yourself before you judge everyone else. Jupiter ain't here to help y'all any more so it's time to sink or swim.

***

SCORPIO: You're doing amazing, sweetie. You evade the hate this month because you're the star , babe! Although, you know better than to try to have a joint Scorpio birthday party, right? While the drama of a Scorpion battle is fun for the whole family, it won't be for you on your day to be beautiful, charming, scary, freaky, misunderstood (*no one gets us 'til we're fuckin'), and drop dead sexy.

***

SAGITTARIUS: We know y'all hate to have responsibilities and love to flake out on plans / people but for the love of Jesus H Christ, stick to one thing this month. The drama of betrayal y'all get off on isn't cute this time around and it *might* just stick. Don't let someone hold a grudge against you forever 'cause you absolutely had to run away. You are a beautiful wild stallion that cannot be reigned, so please tame yourself. Everywhere will always be shinier and cuter than where you are if you can't just sit.

***

CAPRICORN: Babe, we know you love your job, but we kinda don't care. It's endearing how you're always working hard and secretly hoarding all your money like a little dragon on a pile of gold but maybe go on and treat someone besides yourself this month. Maybe indulge in a little thing called your feelings for once? Maybe even your feelings about, gasp, another person! They are there no matter how much you try to logically think your way the fuck out and away from them (that never really works).

***

AQUARIUS: Welcome back to Earth, or at least maybe somewhere close? We know you are such an alien, and such an enigma, and sO wEiRd & DiFfErEnT but maybe cut us a break on the savior complexes and airy indifference this month. Humanity is fucked, and we know we're on a spiral binge without your condescension at our plebian ways and "schedules." Can y'all just be solid this month without floating away? I wonder.

***

PISCES: Honestly Pisces, go the fuck off. Y'all might even be bigger crybabies than Cancer this month and we are *here for it.* Get all of that drama together and drag the fuck out of everyone. You deserve it. They deserve it. We on the sidelines watching deserve it. It's time for the water works and being swept away with the current. Take us down to the depths of our darkest dreams and deny us the pleasure when we get there.

MOM, LOOK, I'M IN A MAGAZINE!!
GUEST COLUMN
SEX
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B
C

No War but the Grass War

Of the struggles with capitalism that we find ourselves enmeshed in, one of the most consistent is the balancing of idealistic desire with the need to earn enough to be sheltered and fed. There are, of course, methods to mitigate our dependence on money. We can live frugally with our best friends, we can scam food and clothing, we can pool labor and resources. If we're able, we can largely circumvent the system, living outside of it, with varying degrees of intensity and success. But most of us either can't or won't live out *Evasion*, or have long term plans that require us to grind long enough to fulfill them, and this requires us to compromise our values a bit, swallow our pride, and find work.

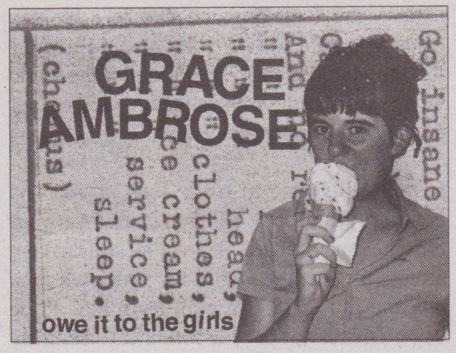
For a couple of years, I drove a flatbed truck through and beyond Piedmont country roads, wide straps ratcheted over pallets of fertilizer and grass seed, triplicate invoices on the dash, coffee in the cup holder. I admired the pastoral roadside and mountain forest at highway speed, only stopping to refuel or deliver. I was constantly moving: from warehouse to maintenance shed, garage to detached trailer in the middle of a field, shucking 50 pound sacks from truck to ground, leaving the pink invoice third underneath a bag of fescue, climbing in the truck, and heading to the next drop. The pace was frenetic, the region's climate and widespread suburban development supporting a booming landscaping industry that I was now a part of, and in the lull between deliveries, I began to examine what that meant.

A few years prior, I'd worked several landscaping jobs, as they were easy to get, undemanding, and paid reasonably well. Much less political than I am now, I thought that most landscaping, dominated by expanses of finicky grasses, was the dumbest shit ever, but I failed to see the more widespread implications of the horticultural practices that were paying my bills. Like most people, I stayed busy, collected a check, and didn't ask many questions. It was the delivery job, and my growing hatred of it, that motivated me to start asking myself how the work contributed to some of the ideologies and practices that I had come to despise in the intervening years.

The DIY ethos of punk rock had nurtured a nascent interest in gardening, and landscaping jobs had provided me with a decent knowledge base for implementing plans for raised beds and soil amendments. Committed to chemical-free growing, I realized the hypocrisy in accepting money from an industry sustained by petrochemicals. Every day, I drove a heavy diesel truck to increasingly remote locations, where developers had clear-cut and graded a hillside to install cheap tract homes. I would then unload thousands of pounds of hybrid grass seed and petroleum-derived nitrogen fertilizer, which would begin a perpetual cycle of seed-fertilizer-herbicide that would ruin the soil, and continue the subjugation of natural ecosystems to the short-sighted and destructive whims of people. I became increasingly uncomfortable with my place in the scheme, and with each delivery, less willing or able to justify my participation. This discomfort amplified my growing distaste for busting my ass in the neverending intensity of a Carolina sun, and culminated in me turning in my notice one afternoon, covered in sweat and the dust of agricultural lime, smiling as I walked out the door.

In quitting, I realized that while not the final route to victory, small political acts in the personal realm are essential to larger revolutionary progress. If we want to come correct in the greater world, we have to correct ourselves, if not first, then concurrently, as we call out the systems we find ourselves living in. If we want to end capitalism, we need to identify how we are participating in it, and take readily accomplishable steps to lessen that involvement, instead of accepting that involvement as inevitable, and offsetting it with promises of future upheaval. That line of thought is a cop out. The dismantling of a structure begins with an understanding of its construction. Every act that perpetuates it is a rafter, a foundation brick, a ten penny nail. By realizing how we've helped to build, and work to maintain the building, we can begin the process of tearing that fucker down.

Dave, 5701 Ruth Dr., Charlotte, NC 28215



My last column as coordinator of *Maximum Rocknroll*! We'll send the mag to print tonight; and three days later I'll have moved out of this house, left for my new band NEON's first tour, and packed my bags for two months spent in Australia. It has been a wild three years.

Being a coordinator at *Maximum* has truly been one of the great honors and privileges of my life—to have been entrusted with the care of this magazine, archive, house, legacy is not a responsibility that I took or take lightly. It's thankless work, yes (see: cleaning up cigarette butts, copy editing George Tabb's inconceivably boring prose, playing punk diplomat more times than I care to count), but it's also joyful (see: blasting AFTERBIRTH and the SQUITS and TEDDY AND THE FRAT GIRLS and BORED TO DEATH and CHAOS [Swiss one!] and ABUSE OF SUBSTANCE and SHITFUCKS, poring over old Polish photographs with Robert Refuse, hosting dozens and dozens of bands, anytime Robert Collins walked into the house, each and every friendship that I made here).

It's so special to be part of something so much bigger than yourself, particularly something that is so formative to so many people. One of the reasons *MRR* succeeds is because it is intergenerational (and always has been! Tim was geriatric in punk years!)—it always makes space for new people with new backgrounds and new experiences to get involved. It's time for me to go and for fresh minds and bodies to take the reins.

At once I am the most energized and the most exhausted by punk that I've ever been. Cheap thrills (drugs, drinking, petty crime, guitar solos) aren't cutting it for me anymore and neither was doing the magazine. I'm excited to leave, to return to being a civilian punk, and to involve myself in our activities here in ways that feel exciting and new—working on the archive, helping to wrap up our new website (Bryony! Oli! You are lifesavers!), writing record reviews, and taking a step back from the day to day. I can't wait to start encountering the magazine as a reader again—looking forward to that familiar excitement of receiving a new issue in the mail! It's been a long time since I've been surprised by anything printed here.

I always say (and probably have said in these pages!) that if there was an issue of *MRR* where I loved every band interviewed, it would be a failed issue. This magazine is for everyone (so long as you have something worthwhile to say!). I've been exposed to more music than ever before, which is in turn inspiring, humbling, and numbing. (There's *a lot* of crap out there.) Being at the magazine has given me a sense of both how small and how big our world really is. There is of course the group of friends and acquaintances that I feel personally connected to, which seems to grow more connected and close closer in by the second (suffocatingly so at times! Delete your Instagram account!). But there is so much more beyond that—some of the disenchantment I feel about the most visible (to me) level of punk has been mitigated by learning about communities and projects that are self-determined and immune to the mainstream punk hype machine, who aren't invited to be a part of the fest industrial complex and don't want or need to be, because they've built their own vision of No Future for themselves. Those are the punks that this magazine exists for. Send us your stories, not because you need our help to tell them (you don't need our validation!) but because so many people could stand to see that there are other ways to live beyond the ones we sell each other every day. Yours is the history we should be documenting.

My vision for punk in 2018? I'm looking forward to the death of cool, the foregrounding of freaks, the re-separation of punk and hardcore, and a renewed emphasis on aesthetics, tunes, original and uncomfortable ideas, and the Total Package. I'm excited to have the time to commit to doing my part to make that reality.

Thanks for reading. Thanks for the correspondence (hate mail included!). Thanks for the mixtapes, the places to sleep, the beers and meals in countries all over the world. Thanks for trusting me with your stories and art and ideas. Thanks for believing in what we do here. Long live *Maximum Rocknroll.*

Stay in touch: thrillingliving@gmail.com.

FRED “FREAK” SMITH
BLACK PUNK PIONEER

At the end of August, a “semi-transient African American man” was found dead, killed from a knife wound behind the softball field of Las Palmas Park, located in San Fernando, CA. This was Fred “Freak” Smith, beloved guitarist who shaped the trajectory of mid-1980’s punk in seminal bands like Beefeater, one of Washington DC’s most inventive outfits. Having recently tried out for the band Romones, he had been living at Blake House, a group home, for a short stint, but wound up traversing the restless streets, seeking solace where he could.

The legacy of Beefeater is summed up most forcefully in their brilliant, genre-blurring LP *House Burning Down*, released on Dischord after the band’s demise in 1986. Combining hard funk, tribal stomp, raw jazz, shades of reggae, metallic leanings, and hardcore prowess, it’s an unmatched landmark, even now. Yet, the band was unstable (drummers came and went) and their fiery brand of politics set the teeth of both right-wing and left-wing punks on edge.

Smith, who changed his name to Freak, was the nimble musical backbone of the band. After joining Strange Boutique, he also helped pave the path of elegant post-hardcore music in DC as well. In the last half decade, he shredded in American Corpse Flower. And wherever he went, he was described as vivacious, spirited, generous, and skilled to the core.

As Bobby Sullivan, singer of Soulside and Rain Like the Sound of Trains, told me via text: “Fred Smith was a larger than life character who literally lit up my youth. As a young person immersed in the DC punk scene, I had an extra in: my older brother lived at Dischord House. That meant I saw many of these bands form, from first talking about it in the living room, to practicing in the basement, and then taking it to the stage. Onam (Tomas), the singer of Beefeater (Fred’s band at the time) also lived at Dischord House, and I spent many mornings with him when I would sleep over. My brother was a late sleeper, so I’d end up in the kitchen getting breakfast together and chatting about all the things I wanted to bounce off my older brothers and sisters—all the fine folks on the Dischord roster in the eighties.

“Fred was somewhat of an aberration in that crew. Unabashedly cussing, drinking, being himself with no fear of judgment, he was something to behold. He was also a very skilled musician bringing a different flavor to that scene, which was sorely needed. My most poignant memory of him was when my band Soulside played with Beefeater at DC Space, I’m guessing in 1985. Scott, our guitar player, asked if he could borrow Fred Marshall half-stack and Fred replied, ‘Yeah mother fucker! And do whatever you have to do. Smash it if you need to!’ We all knew he was serious because that’s exactly the type of guy he was.”

Other DC rockers like Jason Farrell of Swiz / Bluetip / Red Hare recall his outsized personality too. He emailed me this recollection:

“In 1984, I was a 14 year old little skater kid just starting to go to shows, meeting other skaters/hardcore kids, taking every opportunity to stage dive, reveling in this crazy scene we stumbled into. I didn’t yet know much about the smaller DC bands that were percolating at the time (Rites of Spring, Beefeater) because all my friends and I were focused on whatever Government Issue and Marginal Man were doing.

“I’d seen Void a few times prior, but they didn’t really click with me until this one Wilson Center show...they were killing it. But apparently it wasn’t enough to satisfy this big black dude who kept screaming and heckling them from the pit. “I better hear some motherfuckin’ ‘My Rules!’ Goddammit! If I don’t hear ‘My Rules’ in the next ten seconds I’m gonna kill every motherfucker...” etc. It was funny at first, but then it got a little weird and scary. After a few songs like this, the air was tense... The singer seemed nervous. People didn’t know how to react...my little friends and I thought some shit was about to go down, and whatever it was would be beyond our capacity. But then they played “My Rules,” the place exploded, and this crazy dude was overjoyed. In the time since, I have convinced myself that this crazy man was Fred “Freak” Smith.”

Our counterculture needs to reckon with the future. More and more legacy punks deserve attention and advocacy. I have personally seen medical issues sideswipe those I have been lucky enough to play alongside—like members of Mydolls, Anarchitex, Big Boys, the Dicks, the Nerves, and the Hates. Others, including Dave Dictor of MDC, have partnered with me on projects. But all have dealt with dire health issues. As punks age, they often feel economic duress quite intensely. While some cities like Austin and Denton (both in Texas) have set up some infrastructure and programs for musicians, much more needs to be done.

In addition, punks who are female, queer, people of color, and / or differently abled are even more at risk, due to ongoing discrimination. Thus, those fighting for justice, equality, and fairness should not merely protest Trump’s agenda, they need to react pro-actively to the issues affecting a growing segment of punk veterans struggling to pay bills, maintain homes and health, and stay free and productive.

— David Ensminger

Photo: Al Flipside

FRED SMITH
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CAT BROOKS

from the Anti Police-Terror Project

belong to the

This fall, 50 Bay Area punk bands came together on Evaluate What You Tolerate: A Two Volume Compilation and Zine Against White Supremacy, Racism and Hate to raise money for the Oakland-based Anti Police-Terror Project (APTP) and their work to a create strong community support system for Black, brown and poor people. Evaluate What You Tolerate was made in solidarity with people who are profiled, left unsupported, pushed out of their homes, murdered by police, made to feel like they don't belong, deported, and targeted. It's a nod to the importance of community care, defense and resistance against the brutalization of our friends, family and communities.

Alongside my work on the comp and zine, I had the privilege of interviewing Cat Brooks, the co-founder of the Anti Police-Terror Project (APTP) and interim director of the National Lawyers Guild's San Francisco Bay Area chapter (NLG) about her work and views on building power. Cat Brooks is one of the most dedicated organizers I've ever met. She was part of the #BlackFriday14 who stopped a Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) train full of Black Friday shoppers; she blockaded Oakland's police headquarters to call on the City of Oakland to #defundOPD and #FundBlackFutures; she helped end Oakland mayor Libby Schaaf's attempt to crackdown on night marches; and she's helping to push nazis out of the bay with a giant crew. Cat Brooks is a force, so is the Anti Police-Terror Project.

APTP is a coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to ending state-sanctioned murder and violence perpetrated against Black, brown, and poor people. They're Black led, multi-racial, and multi-generational. They organize to resist police terror and create a strong and sustainable community support system. Currently, they work on the prominent #DefundOPD campaign (in the wake of the Oakland Police Department sex scandal), they train first responders on how to conduct independent investigations of police terror as soon as they happen, they put out the annual Reclaim MLK week of actions, and so much more.

Interview, introduction, and photos by Vanessa Malocchio. Additional photos provided by Brooke Anderson.

MRR: How does the Anti Police-Terror Project build strong and sustainable community support systems? How did you all get there as an organizing strategy to resist police violence against Black, brown, and poor people?

Cat Brooks: Let's start with an easy one, shall we...The founding members of APTP have tried and failed at a lot of models. But, after a long time of working together, we realized, yes, it's great having people in the streets but we also need to be on the offensive and not just on the defensive. And on top of that, we shouldn't just be reacting to the terms of the state, but to the fact that we're under militarized occupation every single day. So, we built a response model to police terror that was born of the people and we started interrupting the narrative with alternative models to policing.

We have our first responders team who go out within thirty minutes to an hour after the police have murdered someone. We identify bystanders, we talk to the community, and we speak to the family. Once we establish contact, if the support is welcome, we help them by organizing fundraisers, offering pro-bono legal support, working on communication strategies to alter the narrative, and putting together a legal defense package.

As for alternatives to policing, we're doing them in several areas in the Bay where folks call our people instead of the police to keep cops out of the most vulnerable communities, where we know their increased presence means increased violence.

MRR: Can you discuss APTP's #DefundOPD campaign and its goal to reduce the OPD budget by 50%? Why is it an important campaign for Oakland?

It's important because the Oakland Police Department now gets 50% of the city's budget, but has been under federal receivership for fourteen years! They can't get their shit together enough to get out of it and the money is better spent somewhere else.

"Federal receivership" happens when agencies regularly commit acts against people's constitutional rights and an independent, governmental trustee is appointed to create systemic change from the inside. It began in 2003 when four veteran OPD officers who called themselves "The Riders" got caught planting evidence, beating suspects, and falsifying reports. It resulted in a $10.9 million settlement to the plaintiffs (mostly young men with drug-related criminal records). Then, after that, the OPD was involved in several high-profile killings. The most recent egregious act was the rape of a minor by over fourteen Oakland Police Department officers. The Oakland Police Department receivership has failed to keep the OPD accountable and has cost taxpayers over $13.6 million in the past 14 years.

So, given the long track record of murdering, tormenting, torturing, raping Black and brown and marginalized communities in the city of Oakland, we have to begin to ask the question—with all the needs of this community, why are we investing all of this money into a security force that doesn't keep anybody secure?

Most of the folks that end up getting harassed and / or beaten and / or imprisoned and / or murdered by the Oakland Police Department are dealing with the intersectionality of race, class, and mental health. Mental health workers usually get over 6,800 hours of training to be able to adequately and empathetically deal with their clients. The OPD, according to an assistant deputy chief, says they get eighty hours if they so choose. So, why would we not take money out of the Oakland Police Department budget and give it to civilians who are probably in student debt from learning how to deal with this very crisis? Why is the Oakland Police Department doing work that Black, brown, and poor civilians in our community can already do?

THIRD WORLD RESISTAN
UNITED TO FIGHT
Stop Urban Shield
END POLICE WAR ON OUR COMMUNITIES

Furthermore, if we're ever going to get to place of abolition, we've got to start being brave, risky, and imaginative enough to start taking money out of policing and putting it into community-based models like restorative justice.

If there's a beef between two rival groups about turf, what would it look like to send OG's trained in restorative justice to deal with that conflict as opposed to police? We're talking about more peace in the streets, less violence, and less incarceration. What would it look like if we had a council of elders to deal with things like inter-communal violence, domestic violence, and child support issues as opposed to the police? There are places with mountains of research showing successful alternatives to policing that we can be investing in right now as opposed to militarized policing that just gets people killed or incarcerated.

MRR: Why do you think local campaigning and direct action groups like APTP are more effective than big national non-profits? So, for example, there's the National Lawyer's Guild (NLG) vs. the ACLU, there's the Movement for Black Lives / #blacklivesmatter chapters vs. the NAACP...

We're fighting for our liberation so all tactics and strategies matter as long as they're born with the goal of liberation—although some of the groups you mentioned I don't think believe in liberation. They believe that if we tinker enough around the edges of the system, eventually we'll get to where we're trying to go. That's just not true. This system was born out of the blood and rape and sweat and torture and torment of indigenous people and Africans. Period. End of discussion. If you're not about dismantling this beast, then you're not about liberation.

That said, we also have to meet the people where they're at and, if we're really talking about winning, I've got to talk to Ms. Fey who lives next door to me. What Ms. Fey knows is that yesterday at 11:00 a.m. somebody got gunned down in her driveway, so I can't go to her and say, "Ms Fey, I need you to send all the cops out of our neighborhood right now," because Ms. Fey is going to look at me like I've lost my motherfucking mind. I can stand on legitimate ground with her after I've done the local work of building small, replicable models that are about divesting from this system and investing in the people and community security.

Too many of us live in this place where the mentality is like "if you don't understand why we don't need the police or if you don't understand why deportations are bad then fuck you, I'm not dealing with you." But, the ugly, bitter, nasty truth is that good organizers need to meet the masses where they're at without judgment and figure out how to move them to where we need them to be. You feel me? That's the real work.

Lastly, as grassroots organizations, we have to localize our struggles because that's where the people are at! If we have enough localized struggles and we figure out how to communicate amongst all of them, then we can build real power—and that's how we win. Fuck the federal level. Most nonprofits are attached to the government in some way. We know that the "nonprofit" was created in a direct counter response to the community empowerment programs like the Panthers put on to keep them in line.

MRR: Does APTP have any critics?

Both myself and APTP have many critics. We've learned recently that the Oakland Police Department uses me, Cat Brooks, in training videos on how to deal with protesters for their cadets. We've got a lot of people on the right that are all lives matter, blue lives matter, etc. so we get death threats and I get death threats. They threaten my family and they threaten my child. It's an incredibly hostile environment to navigate through.

We've also got local advocates right here in Oakland who believe the only way we can get change is through an inside strategy that leaves the people outside of the doors of power, and they're very frustrated with our continuous challenge to that position.

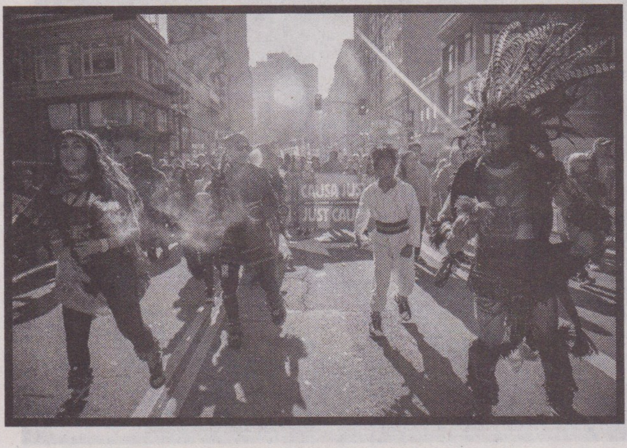
The police commission is a perfect example. We were really fighting for it to be truly community controlled because right now it's run by the mayor and city council. And we were very vocal and told them straight up that you don't get to lie to the people. You do not get to make political deals on the bloody backs of the Black and brown people in the city of Oakland. You have to tell the truth. That has made us some very powerful enemies. They actively worked to keep any APTP member that applied off the commission and then ran a smear campaign because they were mad that we spoke out so loudly about the inadequacy of the commission.

MRR: Wow. I didn't know that.

Yeah, it's ugly. I'm still working on the op-ed. But, everyone's a little busy because, you know, the nazis keep coming to the Bay.

MRR: Ok, so, yeah, let's talk about fucking nazis. How do we push these fucks out of the Bay?

You're trying to get me in trouble...Did you see the unity we showed on Saturday [during the No Hate in the Bay March] across race, class, sexuality, gender, and ideology with the numbers that we showed up in? That's how. And, I actually do believe that. I'm not just saying that because it's a safe answer. We were able



to put away in some cases decades of squabbling over fucking tactics to say the one thing we can agree on—there'll be no nazis in our fucking community and we need to unite in a way that's strategic and disciplined.

And, the answer is also overstanding the fact that if I make a move, it impacts you, and if you make move, it impacts me. That, to me, is how we win. And, that's why we're winning! We're pushing these motherfuckers back with local actions in the streets that based in community unity, solidarity, and power.

MRR: Right now Trump is provoking and empowering fascists. But Obama did some shady shit too. Do you see a difference between the two?

Listen, Black people get real mad when I tell them Obama is Trump is Reagan is Hillary is Bush is Carter is Kennedy...

APTP's co-founder Tur-ha Ak says America has two phases: "smash and grab" and "smooth and soothe." After Bush and Clinton and all of the shit that happened to our communities, America needed a "smooth and soothe" phase because we were at the breaking point. The masses were saying fuck ADIDAS, I want equity. So they put this slick talking, good looking, intelligent guy with a supposed history of organizing in Chicago in office—and he's fucked us just as bad as any Republican. We have to get out of this two party mind state. They're the same goddamn thing. Their interests are in maintaining capitalism and capitalist domination. Which means that the wealthy stay on top and the rest of us stay on the bottom generating income for the ones on top.

It goes back to what I said earlier—we have to stop tinkering around the edges of this thing. We need to be in a 21st century space of imagination, evolution, and inspiration and ask "OK, what else could work in the place of this?" And, then, go about the business of building it.

Between now and the time this fucking orange guy is out of office, my biggest hope is that we have real, honest, and truthful conversations with ourselves and a group emerges committed to building enough a base to make another party that meets the people where they're at and gets us further away from the bullshit capitalist and patriarchal system that we're under.

MRR: Why is it important to be led by the people on the frontlines of gentrification, colonization, white supremacy, and police violence?

It's just like...say we're at the end of the world, and saving it depends on a mathematical equation...Don't fucking ask me, yo! I suck at math. Ask the people who are experts in that shit.

Based on the percentages of us [Black people] that are in this country versus the percentages of us that are killed by police, we're the most impacted. Which means nobody knows our story but us and we have to be able to lead because we have the most information. Self-determination means you have a right to dictate how you live, how you eat, how you breathe, and how you struggle.

So, if you're talking about how Puerto Rico gets independence, ask Puerto Ricans. If you're talking about how to fucking end the violent attacks on the trans community, ask trans people. If you're talking about nazis on the UC Berkeley campus, you ask the students. If you're talking about how we stop domestic violence against heteronormative women, talk to those women. Because they have lived it. It's not about power and control, it's about benefiting on the experience of the people that have been the first hand survivors of transgression so we can build an actual winning strategy. And, all I can say to those people is once you all figure that out, I will show up. And, that's what we need people to do. Give respect to the folks in their posts. Anything else is unprincipled and improper.

If we're really talking about building a movement that is successful and centers those most impacted, we have to listen to the voices of the folks that are most been fucked over to win.

MRR: Thanks for that. It's so important. So, let's switch gears a bit...I know a lot of people / organizers in Oakland wear different hats depending on what's going on, but I see the APTP crew almost everywhere throwing down in whatever way they can. Can you speak to the crew and membership? Who can join APTP?

So my face and voice are in a lot of places, but one of the things I really try to articulate is that this is *so* not me. The team is the most amazing, diverse, committed, passionate, and politically grounded people I've ever met in my life. We're Black led, for sure, and our coordinating committee is multiracial. The membership is multiracial, but mostly white. Although we're taking a page out of the Black Panther book and working on specific programming that will provide some relief to folks that are most impacted so that they have some freedom to engage in struggle.

Our work intersects with immigration work, housing work, trans rights work... The intersectionality is all around and that has opened us up to having a very large membership base of people who know that the police are just front line of a larger white supremacist machine that's attacking all of us. We have folks from all of these different movements and communities engaged in our work because we're [APTP] doing the political work of uniting the movement. The unification of our movement is what we need to win.

STOP POLICE BRUTALITY
JUSTICE 4 ANDY LOPEZ
REPARATIONS

Our model is pretty open and pretty clear for joining APTP. If you share our politics around how state sanctioned violence and terror is not OK, then we fuck with you. We may differ on how we get to liberation, but as long as you are principled enough to come to the conversation around strategy, we can get to a place where we can talk about tactics. At the end of the day, it's still about the liberation of our people so we stand strongly in the organization's foundational belief that Black people must lead because Black people are most impacted. If you can fuck with those two dynamics, we fuck with you.

So, as long as you're not down with white supremacy, as long as you can have principled struggle, as long as you understand that what you do impacts me and what I do impacts you, we can riot together. No problem. And, that's created a wide base of support for us and an easy entry point for new folks coming into the work.

I, YR EQUAL & OPPOSITE REACTION,
WILL DESTROY YOU

MRR: Do you think "Free Speech" is a white supremacist concept?

Let's start with what it actually says—because this is the greatest hoax white supremacists have played on our people to date. The First Amendment says that your government owes you free speech and that the government cannot shut you down. But, that has jack shit to do with groups that are able to garner more people and more noise than you. They have absolutely manipulated this conversation.

The other thing is, if you read the constitution, it says that all people should be protected, which means that if every time these white supremacist groups come in our communities and attack Black folks, brown folks, LGBTQAI folks, the government is just as responsible to those folks as they are to the hate groups.

But, we need to stop dicking around with fucking language about free speech. We have as much right under the Constitution to resist that shit and say hell no, not in our community. Not yesterday, not today, not tomorrow, and not ever.

MRR: What is your advice for people just getting their start in organizing and for people whose campaigns or projects failed the first time?

Study, study, study, study, study. Study Marxism, study socialism, study communism. Study the Black nationalist movement, study the white nationalist movement…Read, read, read. Go to forums and workshops. Learn early security practices to protect from infiltration. Identify mentors in a community whose work can be vouched for so you can train up under them. Think and act outside of the box. Don't accept the concessions that the state gives because really and truly they're just trying to hush you up. Avoid social media wars. They don't do anything but damage, and that's a self-critique so I know what I'm talking about.

In terms of folks whose program didn't work the first time…Analyze why didn't it work. Who should you have contacted? Were you operating by yourself? What did work? What could be replicated? What could be shifted and what conditions should you be paying attention to in order to make your program work? And, most importantly, try again.

Get more info about APTP at antipoliceterrorproject.org. Buy a copy of the *Evaluate What You Tolerate* comp and zine at evaluatewhatyoutolerate.bandcamp.com. Find out about upcoming *EWYT* events at facebook.com/evaluatewhatyoutolerate.

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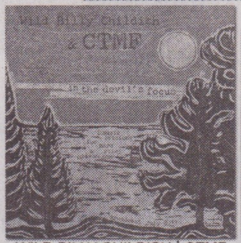

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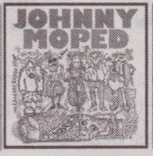

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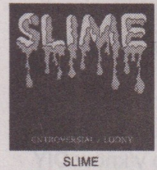

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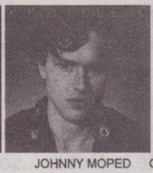

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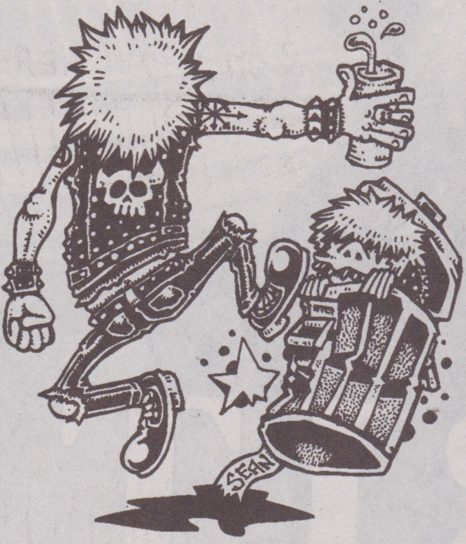

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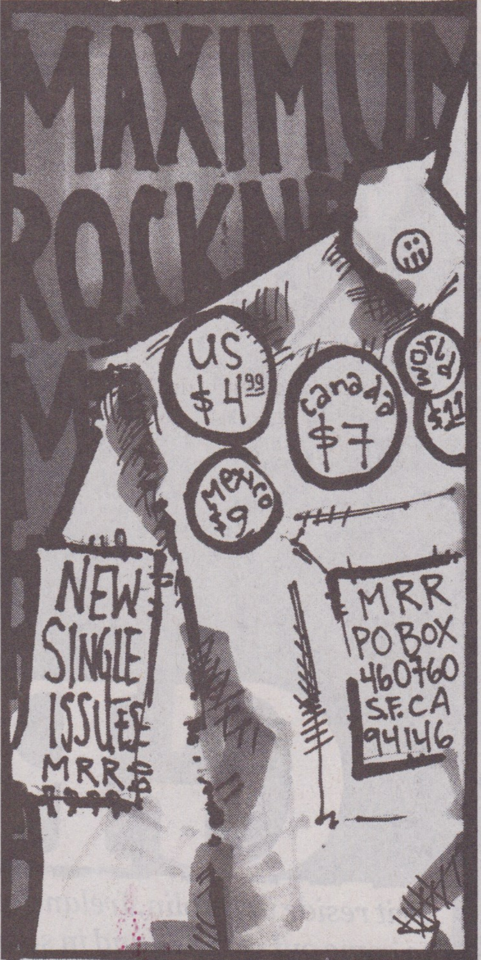

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GRIT

Grit reside in Dublin, Ireland and are one of the most refreshing bands to come out of the Island in some time. I'm one of the biggest Oi! heads I know, but what makes Grit special is that lyrically and musically they're far past standard Oi! / punk. They play a blend of Criminal Damage / Camera Silens-esque Oi! splattered over hook ridden political punk. Their sound is unique and they've put out some of my favourite tunes in ages. Their new EP, Diamond, is out now on Contraszt, Distr-oi!, Pumpkin, UltraPeace, and Visions of Warning.

Interview and introduction by Mick McCann of UltraPeace Records. Live photos by Marcin Załuga, Fabrizio Ara and David Pujol.

MRR: You're just fresh off a tour of South Europe. How did it go? Give us the scoop. I heard you sold lots of the EP.
Clodagh: We travelled by ferry from Ireland to the north of France and played ten shows in a row. We played in some cities and spaces where we had been in various times over the last ten years with other bands. It was wonderful to see them still thriving. I enjoyed encountering little pockets of diversity (for example, minority languages) which is refreshing in a world that is becoming more and more homogenous.
Byrneos: One of the striking things for me, more so than any other time, was that every place we played had different versions of the same story—that of gentrification tearing culture and communities apart, which we also see in Ireland. After our return the Grenfell Towers went on fire in London. I see this (the deaths of working class people) as the inevitable result of these gentrification policies.

MRR: As a big fan of all your previous bands what prompted you to try a slightly different sound than the crust / D-beat vein you are known for?
Eric: Well me and Byrneos have always been big fans of Oi! and that vein of punk, especially the French stuff. We always talked about one day doing a band for real, but it took about six years of joking around to have a jam. The rest just fell into place with John, then Sean, and finally Clodagh joining the band. I love so many types of punk and have tried out many different sounds in different bands over the years. I think sometimes people can be lazy with descriptions...like everything that is distorted gets dubbed crust and everything else is punk. I've played in hardcore bands, noize punk bands, D-beat bands, etc. I love it all. There's enough room for every style. There's not enough of us to be divided by sub-genres and stupid fashion. Look at the world around us...we haven't got a hope alone so why put up barriers within this tiny scene of ours.
Byrneos: I guess it is just the type of band we wanted to see ourselves and no one was doing this style in Dublin...so y'know DIY and all that. I have always listened to many types of punk music and came up in a scene where mixed bills were the norm so to me it is all just "punk" and not really as much of a jump as some people seem to think. I mean, when we were playing in heavier bands doing a long drive to play with other heavy bands the last thing I wanted to listen to in the van was more of the same! It would be more likely to be Hard Skin than Heresy. I love a bit of Neurosis on a wet Wednesday but Friday night beers are more likely to be with Runnin'

Riot or Leatherface as the soundtrack.
John: I listen to all sorts of music and had been itching to try something that wasn't a hardcore / crust / D-beat band for a good few years before Grit started playing together. I became really intrigued by the thought of playing straight driving 4/4 beats that would open doors to playing fills in different ways. Also holding back on playing fills or crashes in the name of trying to write a better tune. Leave my ego at the door you could say. I found the idea of less being more and getting more out of repeating ideas and patterns to be exciting prospects. You could argue it's a lot easier for me to play in Grit compared to my other bands but I really like the different sound and energy we have in this band. Maybe it stems from me loving hip-hop as long as I've loved punk but I think sometimes the beat needs nothing more than solid repetition.

MRR: Ireland is renowned for having a huge flux of youth leaving its shores for the UK, Australia, and Canada every year from lack of jobs. With the unemployment rate being the lowest in ten years do you see things getting easier for Irish punks in the future? Or has it affected you at all?
Eric: If anything I think it's getting harder for a lot of people. The difference between this economic surge and the boom of the early '00s is that this time, people are only earning Recession-era wages / social welfare. Austerity policies of the last eight years have left the country completely crippled in terms of social services, health care, etc. On top of that we are in the worst housing crisis in recorded memory. Thousands of families have been evicted from their homes since the crash of '08. Couple this with a neoliberal government who have sold off vast amounts of land and "social housing" to private developers who have priced many people out of the market and gentrified much of the cities. During the economic downturn many squats and punk spaces emerged in Dublin and since the "recovery" these have mostly all been evicted to make way for big business. There are definitely more job opportunities than two years ago, but what good is a job if you still can't afford to live?
Byrneos: I think the statistics regarding lower unemployment rates are not reliable. Many people have been forced to "employment schemes" where, in return for full- or part-time work, they receive a small extra allowance in their social welfare payments but are taken off the live register (the statistical system used to count people who are living on statutory entitlements). Large numbers were actively encouraged to leave the country by the government...and did en masse. So they don't show in unemployment figures anymore.

MRR: I've been out of Ireland for five years now and besides the lack of *craic* abroad I've noticed that what makes Irish punk unique is that even at the shittiest of times / singing about the saddest of things there's a certain element of humor, which I think helps us cope! What do you think makes Irish punk unique if anything at all?
Eric: I think we have a deeply ingrained coping mechanism that involves huge amounts of black humor and general laughter at the darkness in the world. As far as Irish punk being unique...I dunno, it differs quite a lot from region to region within Ireland but as a whole I guess the scene has been strongly dictated by being an island somewhat isolated from the rest of the European continent. Because of the comparative lack of access to bands, zines, festivals, social centres etc., I think it has meant that people really push themselves in the projects they take on within punk here.

MRR: Things are slowly changing in Ireland with a referendum for abortion finally being considered after a long fight from Irish activists. Gay marriage was legalized two years ago and the new Taoiseach is openly gay and a POC. Do you see Ireland progressing in the last few years from the tyrant that is the Catholic church or is this just a fluke?
Byrneos: Leo Varadkar, the new Taoiseach (Irish head of state similar to President or Prime Minister) has been accepted simply because he is conservative and wants to maintain the status quo. He is a member of the Fianna Gael political party. To put this in perspective, the party has its roots in the "Blueshirts" who were an Irish fascist organisation in the 1930s.

He is fully supportive of and enforces austerity policies in Ireland. Similar to how families killed by Obama's drones probably didn't care that he was the first Black President of the USA, gay people and the immigrant working class here won't be immune from Leo and his party colleagues' policies.

As for the Catholic church, at a time when they barely have enough priests to say masses and have to import some, I'd love to say it was on its death bed in Ireland but unfortunately it is not. It still has massive power—control of some hospitals and controlling 90% of primary schools (for children aged 5- to 12-years-old, a highly influential period). It means loads of people (even those who hate the church) still baptize their children to make sure they can get a local school place.

In general Irish culture, the church still gets handed the power over significant life events: birth, marriage, death. I guess the main thing is that even if the church disappeared tomorrow the effects of the abuse suffered and the church's negative influence on the psyche of Irish people will be impacting us for generations to come. Y'know, we will still be wanking with the lights off for a long time.
Eric: I'd like to add that the abortion question is only being raised, in my mind, due to huge public mobilizations around the issue and

tireless work by the "Repeal the 8th Campaign" and other such groups.

The fact that a mass movement is required to fight for what is seen as a basic human right in most countries illustrates the legacy of Catholic doctrine within political legislation here. Whether the churches are empty or not, we still have many fights ahead of us and many scars to heal in terms of the survivors of child imprisonment, sexual abuse, the criminalization of sexuality, childbearing, and institutional cultural shaming. Not to mention outright genocidal policies. For example, look up the recent "Tuam Mother and Baby home" scandal.

MRR: Ireland doesn't get as much light as I think it should for the amount of proper punk it's released in the last five years. Can you please give the readers three of the most important Irish punk bands that we should all check out?

John: Here's four. Striknien DC, the Dagda, Putrefaction and Frustration.

Eric: Bastard Youth, Toxic Waste, Knifed, Crowd Control (all dead and gone but still relevant as hell).

Byrneos: I find it difficult to pinpoint what makes a band important. Most examples that came to me while thinking about this question are of personal importance, reminders of particular times and places, but maybe not important in the bigger sense. I think the most important bands are the ones around today not just the greats of the past so see the list of current bands in a later question. Because of this I've gone a little off track with my answers and am going to mention some places or people I think have been important to the Irish scene.

1) A collective practice space in Dublin called Karate Klub (the name was taken because of the building's former use as a dojo). It has been running now for a decade. A practice space might not seem like such a big deal but I remember the stupid amounts of money we used have to pay businesses to use practice rooms in the past before K-Klub. The space is used for other things as well such as film screenings and "fight club," or punk self-defense and fitness. I strongly believe because of the space loads of Dublin bands can be way more productive than previous generations. A bit of credit where it's due, the space and the fact it is still active has been mainly down to the three Putrefaction lads (a band that if they were from a sexy country like Japan, Sweden, or the right American city would be a lot more popular). The space is ten years old this year so keep an eye out for a forthcoming compilation LP of K-Klub bands which will be a good introduction to the scene here.

2) This one is another place: the Warzone Centre in all its incarnations has always been very important to the Belfast punk scene and inspiring to me personally. The non-sectarian, DIY ethos cultivated by the generations involved has no doubt helped to spawn many great bands over the years.

3) My third choice is Alex from Distro-y Records. He is a major force in getting Irish punk known outside of the island and also bringing some great international bands' music to Ireland through his distro and label. I think he has been a true unsung hero of our scene for many years and even in Ireland a lot of people don't realize the trojan work he does.

MRR: What's great about Grit is that it's hard-hitting but you can still make out clearly what the lyrics are. Can you please give us a little info on what you like to write about? Especially the new song "Diamond," which is fantastic.

Clodagh: As you've mentioned earlier, we all have played in crusty bands which usually have bleak, metaphorical lyrics but we endeavor to have a hopeful or optimistic outlook lyrically with the upbeat type of music that Grit plays. To give a general overview: like any person with empathy, I feel uncomfortable in the unequal society of this country and sometimes write about the social issues I encounter. Eric and I have also written about staying positive in the face of adversity. (Push on through). "Nowhere Else" is a bit of fun about getting drunk with punk mates.

I'm glad you enjoy "Diamond." I feel a lot of socially acceptable contempt for women from all quarters, moreso if we don't conform body size-wise, are of color, or queer. I wanted to write a feminist song but phrased in such a way that any underdog can relate to the lyrics, pump their fist and sing along.

MRR: Besides punk, what other loves fill up your time between jamming and gigs?
John: Carpentry, cooking, playing the fiddle and shruti box, cycling around drunk out of me head singin' songs to meself.
Eric: Training Muay Thai for the last ten years or so, art, messing around with welding and metal / wood work, hangin' with my amazing partner in crime. Work fills up the rest.
Clodagh: Besides Trudeau's fantasy of "céilís / small impromptu kitchen parties" you mean? Hanging out with my rescue dogs and reading all the books in the library system by women who make music are my current loves.
Byrneos: Work for once—I started a stone cutting apprenticeship a while back and am really enjoying that. I work for the organization who are responsible for the care of our national monuments and get to work on some beautiful old buildings: castles, towers, and the like. Finding and listening to new bands and old bands I haven't encountered before. Kick-boxing.

MRR: When showing punks your 7", all of them are in awe of how nice it looks in terms of its art and layout. Who does all your art?
Eric: I do artwork under the name TwoHeadedDog. I have previously done a lot of illustration work but have been getting a chance to mess around with photos and mixed media in the last few years. I also have access to screen printing facilities so I have been doin' a lot of that recently. I really had an idea in my head from day one with the Grit art and aesthetic. It kind of took it's own path after a lot of experimenting but I'm happy with it. Hit me up at direwolf@riseup.net for band logos, posters, record art, etc.

MRR: Now give us an ol' list of current Irish bands that we should all check out and what is going on for the future of the DIY there.
Eric: Strong Boys, Disguise, Surge, Sissy, Zona Zla, Pozoga, Blow Ins, Vena Cava, Fiend, Overbite, 1000 Drunken Nights, Harvester, United Bottles, Lawfucker, Jollars, Dowth, Rats Blood, Putrefaction, Alps, eXtravision, Dubtones, Orangutan, Out- Straight, the Whole Sick, Wild Rocket.
Clodagh: I saw Shithatt from Ballina recently and they were great.
Byrneos: R.A.Z.O.R.

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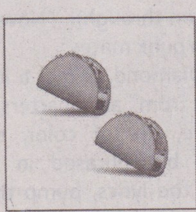

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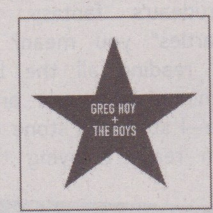

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NO. TO RAPE CULTURE

No. To Rape Culture PDX (No.) is a group working in Portland hardcore and punk communities dismantling rape culture and its pillars. They recently released their hardcore compilation There's no freedom for any of us! *which tells stories of resistance and resilience. It highlights the struggles of various marginalized people and their stories of dealing with and defiance against various oppressions and rape culture. Here we hear from Latisha Rico, Emma Boster, Stacey Spencer, and Anna Vo.*

MRR: History, formation and intention of No.?

Stacey Spencer: A catalyst for No. was a massive callout that happened in the Pacific Northwest of a prominent member of the PNW hardcore scene for about two decades. He was called out for sketchy behavior toward young women and girls, and over the course of that callout over 100 women and girls came forward stating they had similar experiences with this person. It was shocking and terrifying that people had gone through horrible experiences with this person, ranging from unsolicited dick pics to forcible penetrative rape. The question became not just "How did we let this happen from just one person?" but also "How do continue to allow women and girls and other vulnerable people to be subject to this in our scene, and how did it get covered up? Why aren't questions being asked?" Throughout this process we started having conversations about our experiences. We came to find out that *all* of us had experienced this stuff—whether it was being ridiculed, harassed, assaulted, or abused—in the punk and hardcore scene. We first had a women-led workshop in Seattle which got members of the hardcore scene together to address how to prevent this happening in the future. We then brought it down to Portland, had a workshop down here, and formed No. To Rape Culture.

Tish Rico: Part of our goal is also to talk about those things in general—racism, classism, sexism How do these affect rape culture, not just in hardcore? Because hardcore is not just white people.

Emma Boster: The goal is to normalize women and people who are not cis-men in hardcore having a place of power and having a voice. We are here to help each other out, to create a sense of community, to hold people accountable, and to empower each other too.

MRR: What are some tangible aspects of No.? For example, the compilation, zines published, booking shows, workshops, and other events?

Tish: After the Trump presidency, people fell into wanting to protect funding for certain sectors and programs. The comp is to fund communities who are usually hit the hardest—indigenous people and queer homeless youth—and to provide a stage for people to talk about racism, sexism, rape culture, etc. We asked for people of color and queer people to the front when we asked people to submit. There are people on the comp who identify as trans, non-binary, Black, or indigenous to multiple nations including Australia. They talk about their experiences with cops, white supremacists, and then saying "I'm not going to deal with this shit anymore." For example, there is one song about colonization of Australia, which is paired with a song that talks about being a good ally. Another talks about Standing Rock and oil. The last song ends with a prayer indigenous to Guatemala.

Emma: I started booking shows when I became involved with No. and when I started being in a band. I didn't book shows for about five years because I didn't feel any ownership of the scene, even though I'd been around it so long. I asked myself why I hadn't done more than participate, and I realized it was because I was scared. Having No. there makes me feel better and safer because I know it makes other people feel safer. I like to book shows with as much even representation as possible, whilst having a full bill of bands.

MRR: Tell us a little bit about how No. made you feel empowered.

Emma: I feel like I didn't address my abuse before No. I am the person to bottle things up. Being surrounded by people who want to talk about those things made me feel allowed to feel a certain way. That it's okay to feel that way, and that it's not my fault. I don't anyone to feel the way that I felt, before No. I want people to feel supported by the people they see when they go to a hardcore show. It's changing and it's really positive. I just went to a hardcore show in California and it was like a flashback, where I had to stand on the other side of the room because I was afraid.

Stacey: I've had bands come from other cities comment when they come to Portland, "I can't believe how many people come to shows in Portland". Young women and non-binary folks tell us that because we are there at the show, they feel more comfortable. It's been awesome seeing what we have helped create. In terms of workshops, we did a consent workshop at a hardcore show, in between bands. The second big workshop we did was "Pass The Mic" in response to cis-men and other folks ask us how to be an ally. So we decided to do some of the emotional labor, we had some guest speakers from outside the punk scene, all POC, well-versed in their topics, talking to these potential allies about what they can do to make the scene better.

MRR: Will there be more of these?

Stacey: Yes, it will be good to do them once or twice a year because there are new people coming into the scene. We've been on summer break, but Emma with Against The Grain has been booking a lot of shows. Booking shows is a lot of work.

Emma: It is a lot of work. Sometimes it will cost you money. I have had a few femmes and women come and ask me for connections for a venue. I'd like Against The Grain to become a team. I would rather work with women and femmes than men. [*laughter*]

MRR: Tell us about the zines you've created.

Tish: We made a consent zine for the consent workshop. Our zines are connected to a show or a fundraiser for related organizations. We did an "Indigenize Punk and Hardcore" zine, talking about how to decolonize your punk and hardcore scene, and what that looks like. We also created a "No Borders" zine, that talked about immigration and undocumented people and bands who considered themselves a part of that community. In the future I am planning to work with Black women and Black non-binary people about their experiences with rape culture. There will probably be an associated show that donates money to Black Lives Matter.

Vo: There will a zine about trauma, and long-term PTSD responses to rape culture or different types of violence or abuse.

Tish: Some other ideas we threw around were zines about bystander intervention and micro-aggressions.

MRR: How do people get the zines?

Tish: Come to our shows or events. We also table different shows, and all our zines are online for free. Hit us up to print our zines for different parts of the world.

Vo: Some other events that No. have put on are solidarity events like "Pizza Against the Patriarchy," a letter-writing night for undocumented children, skill-building events like a series of queer and trans skateboarding clinics and hangouts, and body-positive swimming lessons this summer—to increase visibility in those arenas of folks who are outside of what is normative or "conventional" appearing. I hope to continue workshops to teach more young POC, femmes, and women how to run sound at shows, record bands in the studio, mix and master, and also do guitar and drum tech-ing for musicians. Like Emma said, to normalize the visibility of those folks in roles that are traditionally dominated by white cis-dudes.

MRR: What does the future look like for No. in terms of the original intent, now that we are a year down the line?

Stacey: We have created this thing that has a pretty big following in the PNW, the US, and the world, as Tish mentioned. We have a lot of resources at this point—we have a lot of connections and an online presence. The model we are working with at this point is anyone with a similar vision as us who wants to create an event can do so under the umbrella of No. If anyone out there wants to do anything they can think of that applies to the No. mission, they are welcome to do that, and we want to help them. All you need to do is contact us, via email or Facebook. Tell us what ideas you have—we want to support you! Whether that is giving money to the cause, helping promote, or being there to table. We want to be there and we want to be involved!

Emma: Everybody is welcome, we are not a club.

MRR: What about people approaching No. around doing a callout?

Stacey: Like doing an accountability process?

Emma: As an organization we would rather find you support from somebody who does that as a profession. It's up to us as individuals if we decide to take that on as a responsibility.

Stacey: As a group we don't do callouts ourselves, and the reason why we don't is because it puts us in danger. We had a situation when our sister group in Seattle did a large public callout without getting group consensus around it and it put people in danger because this person was a very dangerous person. We want to be respectful of one another as organizers and with that said, doing a callout of an individual is not within the boundaries of what we do. We can offer resources or support.

Tish: Also along those lines, people will question the bands we table alongside. Yes, we table along bands with people of color and women as members, but we also table bands with shitty fucking dudes in them. It's a part of their learning—they are in our city and this is what we value. We're fucking here, you may be a shit-ass person, but you didn't chase us away.

Maybe they'll pick up a zine, maybe they'll have dialogue. Some of these people will say "You're willing to talk to us online, but not have dialogue in person", so we want to say "Well, here we are. Let's fucking go."

Emma: To add to that, Tish is fearless. She came to a show that I was involved with, where we had found out that the headlining band used slurs. Just having No. To

NO! TO RAPE CULTURE

Rape Culture as a presence, watching those dudes look over and see what we're about, you could see the wheels turning in their heads. You could see that was not something they were used to. They could go back home to the East Coast and think critically about it. They can be comfortable there, but they need to realize that this is the reality of playing here.

Stacey: Shitty people have been making me feel uncomfortable in this scene for fifteen years, so if I can do my part in making shitty people feel uncomfortable, then that's great.

MRR: A good way to disrupt toxic masculinity.

Tish: Send that message—we are gonna be in bands, we are gonna book the shows, we are gonna be a presence whether you like it or not. We are fuckin' here.

MRR: What is it specifically about punk or hardcore that makes it a good venue for fighting rape culture? And how has the reception been?

Stacey: It's *supposed* to be better. It's not supposed to be like the rest of the world where rape culture runs prevalent. It is a microcosm of that world, but knowing it's supposed to be better gives us a nice platform to stand on where no one is really going to argue.

Emma: Hardcore was founded as a counterculture, you know Nazi Punks Fuck Off and straightedge are anti-racism, and anti-party culture. It boggles me how people can be those things and still be sexist and not wrap their heads around intersectionality.

MRR: Can you tell us how indigeneity, fundraising for undocumented folks and organizing around trans communities intersects with rape culture?

Tish: Within indigenous women and indigenous people in general, there are higher rates of rape and sexual assault. In those communities 1 in 2.5 women will be raped. We learned when making the zine that women coming from Mexico to the US took being rape as a given, so they take birth control to make sure they don't have a child to their rapist. There is no question about it happening. It's not "if" you are raped, it's "when." People don't know that. And with trans people, think about the high rates of murder and sexual violence to trans people. People do horrible shit to trans people. That is something we need to talk about, folks who are getting raped the most.

notorapeculture.bandcamp.com

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All money spent on this compilation goes to supporting the Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women campaign and to the Sexual & Gender Minority Youth Resource Center in Portland, Oregon.

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KUNGFU RICK - Disco 2xCD:Insane grind/HC
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BREAKFAST 2nd LP:Tokyo skate-thrash
SECOND OPINION - CD High Energy thrash
BARBARIC THRASH CD COMPS:Euro,CaliComps
DISCARGA CD -Brazilian fast political HC
CRUCIAL SECTION-LP: 80s RIPCORD-thrash
SEEIN RED / FPO CD: Pissed European HC
MACHINEGUN ROMANTICS-CD:Pre-HATRED SURGE
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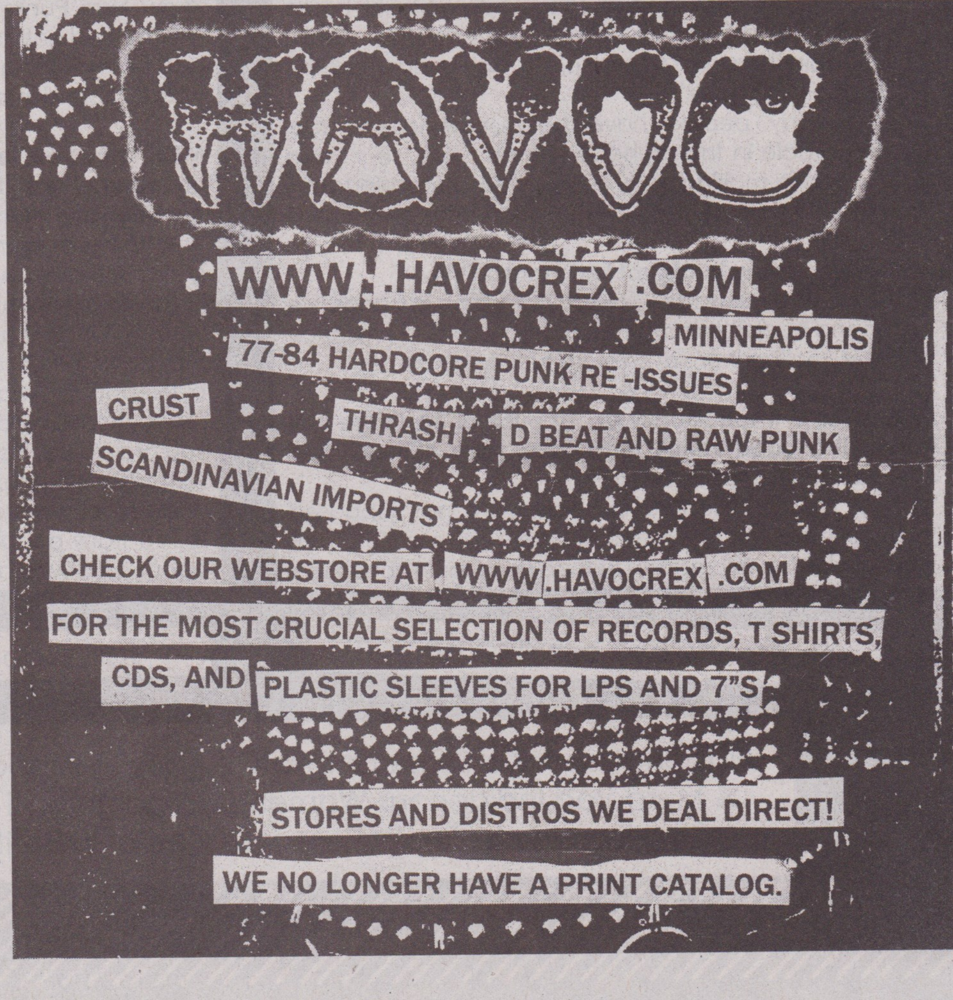

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WELCOME TO SHEFFIELD

THE UGLIEST TOWN IN THE OLD WORLD!

Welcome to Sheffield, the Steel City, regional capital of South Yorkshire in the north of England. Sheffield is nestled in the foothills of the Pennine range and 30 miles directly east of Manchester. Sheffield is full of trees, with the highest ratio of trees to people of any city in Europe. The city and its immediate environs are home to about a million people and a healthy and revered DIY punk scene.

Sheffield went through a serious depression during the 1970s, when the steel and mining industries were hit hard; the National Union of Mineworkers' headquarters was in the north of the city center during the strike between the NUM and Thatcher's Tory government of the 1980s. The post-industrial heritage means the rent and cost of living (and wages) are low; there are a lot of empty buildings within spitting distance from the city center which are now being put to good use. Over the past few years the council has provided free or cheap space to artist collectives, theatre groups, and music promoters to bolster their cultural credentials. However the city was home to collectives doing it ourselves long before local government (which has a disastrously short-termist attitude to the cultural health of the city) cottoned on.

SHEFFIELD'S DIY SPACES

The venerable Audacious Art Experiment is the oldest DIY space still operating in Sheffield. It was set up by the group behind the eponymous record label from Grimsby, via Leeds. The Audacious Art Experiment opened in the shadow of Bramall Lane stadium (Sheffield United FC) in 2010. Before it was lovingly repurposed as a venue, the Audacious Art Experiment was originally a light industrial unit which was used by ravers to make massive speakers. Soon after, punk bands moved into the back room to use it as a practice space. They eventually spread to the whole ground floor when the hippie ravers left. It is now home to Nachthexen, Rob & Natas, Saif Mode, and Sleep Terminal. It hosts hardcore gigs as well as more experimental noise, electronic music club nights, queer dance parties, and radical folk events. The space also has a permanent distro and electronics workshop.

Delicious Clam is the city's newest self-run space and the first to emerge north of the city center, though it was set up with help from the city council. Formerly a beauty salon, it now serves as the second home of the Delicious Clam collective (Nai Harvest, Splutter, Thumbuster, and Blood Sport in the basement). Previously Delicious Clam and record label Tye Die Tapes shared the offices of an old knife factory, where they put on gigs and record bands between 2011–2016. They were eventually evicted and the space torn down; the land is currently being used as a car park and there are plans to build student flats. This serves as a potential threat to the Lughole which is further up the street.

THE LUGHOLE

The Lughole comprises a DIY gig space, workshop, and practice rooms which is collectively run and used by a large number of the punx within Sheffield. The Lughole is well within the city center , off Arundel Street. The area rebranded by the city council as the "Cultural Industries Quarter" was at one point better known for silversmiths and steel workers. From the front you might easily mistake it for an industrial unit like many of the surrounding buildings. The interest of the more attentive punk might be aroused by the increase in lamppost stickers and tags in the vicinity. Walk by on weekend evenings and you'll spot a bunch of punx knocking about the streets between the Lord Nelson Pub and the Holt Café. For many punks, the Lughole means a good time and chaos.

The creation of the space had been brewing for five years prior to its opening. A number of pubs and function rooms across the city were slowly closing their doors, making it harder for the DIY community to have an outlet. After some discussion and a lot of hard work, the perfect location was found. By New Year's Eve 2013 the doors were open for the first event, People from Japan.

The event space is collectively run and used by a gig collective, a mixture of all the Sheffield punk community. Above the event space are two practice rooms which are used almost every night of the week. These rooms have allowed people to start new bands or continue with ongoing projects including Brainfreeze, Chewed Up, Community, Death Job, Detergents, Dry Heaves, Howl, Low Ebb, Pink Cigs, Polluted Brain, Pudge, Rat Cage, Repossessed, Rotten Love, Shitneck, Sievehead, Skiplickers, and War Fucker.

The Lughole sustains itself through the tireless energy of many different people over the years. Arundel Street is being rapidly redeveloped against the wishes of the existent community. Though time may be running out for the Lughole in the current location, the collective will live on and another Lughole will spring up in a different part of town, once the "Cultural Industries Quarter" has become another block of mini supermarkets and yuppie flats.

**COMPILED BY
AVI DEI, BEN SUNSHINE, IAN CAPLETON, AND MARC THOMAS.**

LUG HOLE

SHEFFIELD: WHAT ELSE YOU NEED TO KNOW

Not only are there some amazing vegan food places in Sheffield but the best are those run by the punx. Just head up Chesterfield road, the heart of the city's quinoa-belt. Make No Bones is run by punx who used to cater for gigs, with class comfort food designed by Community bassist Tash KD. Next door to that is Just Falafs (yes, Just Falafs) and is run by Hadar and Avi, who sang in Dry Heaves and is an integral part of the Lughole collective. Other favorites include Burger Lolz, an all vegan burger joint; Frehiwet Habesha, an Ethiopian restaurant with a load of vegan options; New Cod On The Block and Ranmoor Friery, both traditional chip shops with deep fried battered vegan sausages and mushy pea fritters; and Soya Express, a refitted chip shop that makes its own tofu and soya milk.

In the same vein as the DIY spaces, Sheffield's skateboarders have a solid DIY ethic; constantly shifting DIY concrete spots have been set up and knocked down over the last ten years. Still standing at the time of writing are Jon's Park in the Shalesmoor district and Thunderdome in Attercliffe.

Sheffield isn't exactly a tourist destination but punx in search of a bit of culture might also like to check out the Municipal Cemetery, just west of the city center, which has catacombs, a ruined church, and an eerie non-conformist chapel that now hosts events. Just next to the gothic Town Hall is the Peace Gardens, one of only two British monuments to international anti-fascists who fought in the Spanish Civil War (the other is in Liverpool). next to the City Hall is the "Women of Steel" monument which was unveiled by surviving women steelworkers in 2016.

Sheffield is just an amazingly short bike ride from the edge of the Peak District, Britain's first National Park and home to the distinctive custom of well dressing, originally a pagan ceremony to welcome the water gods. South Yorkshire (the county in which Sheffield lies) and neighbouring Derbyshire apparently have the best water for brewing in the UK and as a result Sheffield is abundant in "real ale" pubs.

Also near Sheffield is the beautiful but depressing village of Eyam, where the locals quarantined themselves to contain a lethal outbreak of bubonic plague in the 17th Century. In doing so, they overcame a long-running sectarian feud between Catholics and Protestants. The outbreak took a huge toll on the village, where the pub overlooks a mass grave and mini cemeteries lie in-between the houses.

Mount Pleasant FC is made up of the city's DIY musicians, punx and freaks; a radical football team which is open to all abilities and genders, with a strict "no dickhead" policy. They also organize regular tournaments with like-minded teams from around the country, including the dubious talents of "Athletico Lughole."

KIDS OF THE LUGHOLE: DIY PUNX LABEL

INTERVIEW OF AVI AND IAN BY BEN SUNSHINE

MRR: HOW DID GET KIDS OF THE LUGHOLE GET STARTED?

The label started out of the Lughole, a DIY practice space and venue which, amongst other projects, has provided the catalyst for this golden age of Sheffield DIY punk. Sheffield has consistently been a hotbed of DIY punk but no one has consistently released the music, especially on vinyl. The Sievehead record was an obvious opportunity to get it all going and now we're approaching our tenth vinyl release.

MRR: IS THE LABEL MOSTLY AN IAN MACKAYE STYLE PROJECT TO DOCUMENT WHAT'S GOING ON IN SHEFFIELD, OR ARE THERE PLANS TO WIDEN THE FOCUS AND INCLUDE BANDS FROM FURTHER AFIELD?

So far, although there's a French band and another band from outside Sheffield (Clean Shirts) on the label, there is a clear focus on Sheffield. For these two bands, we felt that they were underrepresented in their local scene and we wanted to provide them with the opportunity to release something on vinyl.

The ethos of the label is one of offering opportunity. Naturally, the Sheffield bands involved with the Lughole and Audacious are the main focus. There would be so many bands that we'd love to put out but broadly we're about documenting what's going on in Sheffield and most importantly, offering bands that perhaps might not get that opportunity to release a record. Despite our most prominent releases being Sievehead and Nachthexen, we're prouder of the scope of opportunity we hope we've been able to offer bands.

MRR: WHEN I PLAY MUSIC OUT OF TOWN (PARTICULARLY HEAVIER PUNK), I FIND THAT IF ANYONE COMPLIMENTS YOUR BAND, THERE'S AN INTRINSIC LINK WITH COMPLIMENTS ABOUT SHEFFIELD AT THE MOMENT. NOT THAT THERE'S A SHEFFIELD SOUND OR ANYTHING, BUT MAYBE THERE'S MORE AN ATMOSPHERE TO SHEFFIELD BANDS?

Absolutely, we find that a lot of what is coming out of Sheffield is really well received. That's not to say that it's necessarily a recent "explosion" though but maybe more of an attempt to document what's going on here. Although the DIY spaces here (Lughole, Audacious, Tye Die, Delicious Clam) have certainly been a catalyst for people to create bands and practice (as well as hopefully inspire people in other ways. With a regular space with all your gear, you get more time to be creative by having the space for a day or evening. What's more, it's also made recording more accessible; Ben Hunter has recorded most of the releases for under £100. In turn, we try to represent this in the cost of the records we put out. Not enough can be said for the impact that DIY spaces can have on a community and Sheffield is a great example of that.

MRR: HOW MUCH DOES THE PUNK PRICING ON THE RETAIL END MATTER? IS THAT A CONSCIOUS DECISION OR IS IT JUST HOW IT WORKS BECAUSE OF THE FACTORS YOU JUST MENTIONED?

It's really important to us. No, it's essential and a very conscious decision. Of course, it's an expensive business but some of the stuff we see for sale is expensive and inaccessible; DIY punk should always be affordable. When we've seen bands selling shirts for £15 or £20 and records for £20 then that's not punk.

MRR: WHAT ARE YOUR HIGHLIGHTS SO FAR?

That's easy, folding and gluing hundreds of Skiplickers and Stalled Minds records. After that, every time we close our eyes we see the record cover. Like we said before, the label has largely been about offering opportunity and so that's what we're most proud of. Saying that, to release the first Sievehead was great and the Nachthexen record is a beautiful thing. To be honest though, running a record label isn't the most exciting thing. [*laughter*]

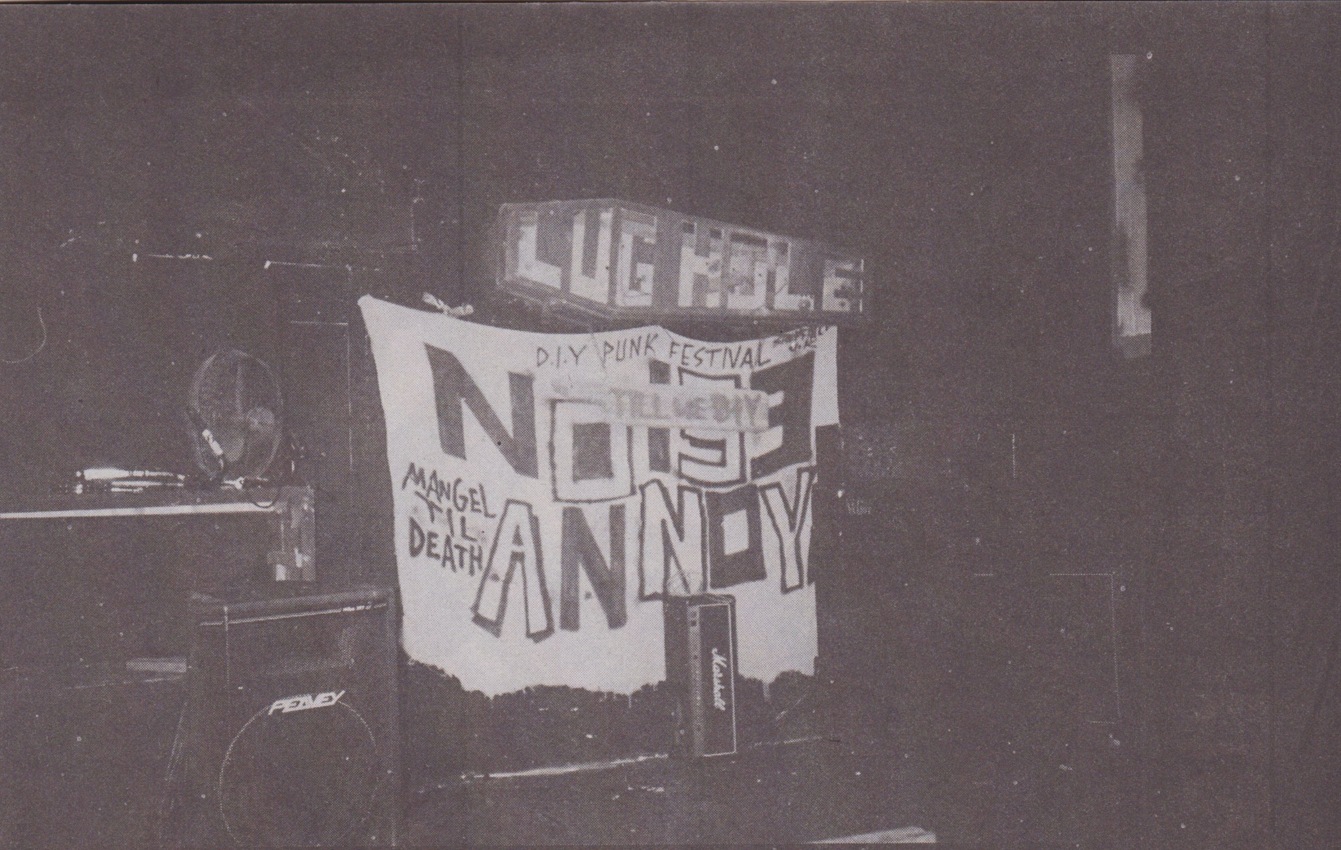

Photo: Oliver Parker

NOISE ANNOYS: KEEP IT PUNK, KEEP IT DIY

Noise Annoys is a DIY punk festival taking place annually on one of the last weekends in July (when it doesn't rain as much). It started as an alternative to a citywide festival called Tramlines, which itself started as a festival to celebrate local artists but has now evolved into a festival that features mainstream artists and costs a whack. Originally Noise Annoys was called Tramplines (tramp in England refers to homeless people but is also yelled at crusties, oogles and punx) because we wanted to create an alternative for the punx.

It takes place at the Lughole and Audacious Art Experiment and is about getting the bands to play here that we want to see on our own terms. We want to make the music affordable and accessible with a clear message that is printed on the Lughole back wall: "DIY or Die." This year, it involved four gigs over three days which ranged from an alleyway gig to a blown PA afterparty. Twenty-one bands played over the weekend and ranged from local Sheffield bands such as Community, Nachthexen, Polluted Brain, Rat Cage, Shitneck, and Sievehead to a bunch of the best UK bands at the moment like Bad Manifest, Hex, Lowest Form and State Funeral, to international bands such as Disguise, Glorious, La Urss, Q, Sheer Mag, and Strong Boys.

Punk and art go hand in hand, so we also had a photo exhibition on the Thursday to kick off the festival. Featuring photos from Ricky Adam, Wonder Girl, and Miff Peasent, it was hosted by Holt Cafe. No speed, no punk; this year there were a range of "space cakes" that made for a few zombies throughout the weekend. Take half and see how you feel after an hour, for fucks sake—we don't get paid enough (or anything) to clean up your sick or put you to bed. Someone brought eye cocaine which is the most crying I've seen at a punk gig since the days of emo.

The festival brain trust consisted of Avi D, Bry Havoc, and Marc Dingdong but would never have been possible without the help of the mass of the Lughole collective and volunteers, who did a massive range of tasks such as airport runs, cleaning, door duties, making food, and sleeping duties. There are so many people to thank but we want to take this opportunity to thank Dave, Fidler, Hannah, Hubbard, Ian, Jo, and Sunshine. Oh, a word of advice for travelling bands; respect the place you're staying or you might get a bad reputation and not get invited back. We got to see the bands we love play in the venue we love, one that is so important to Sheffield. With only a minor issue on the first night, 300 punks in one place over the weekend and one fight is a fucking win in our book. We would do it all again in a heartbeat; keep it punk, keep it DIY.

NOISE ANNOYS JULY 21–23 2017

PHOTOS BY: ALEX J. BROWN (AB), ANNEKE CHIPS (AC), MIFF PLEASANT (MP), & OLIVER PARKER (OP)

D.I.Y PUNK FEST
Marshall
Marshall

D.I.Y PUNK FESTIVAL
DARK THOUGH S

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: SHEER MAG (AB), RAT CAGE, NAZI KILLER & STRONG BOYS (MP)

CK YOUR KING
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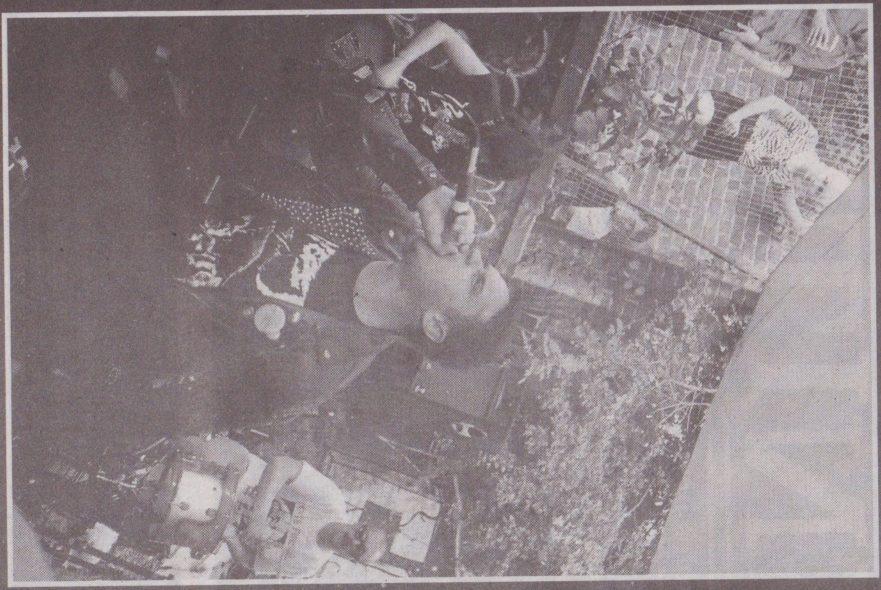
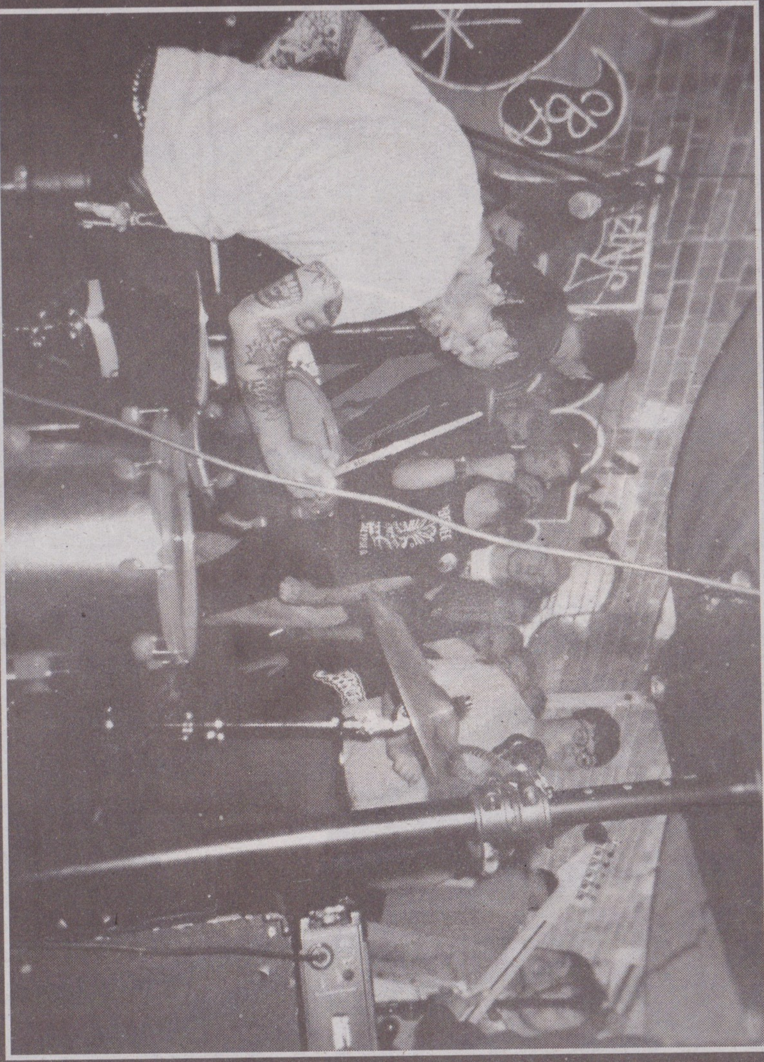




CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: HEX (OP), PINK GRIP (AC), SIEVEHEAD (AB), SMASHING SHIT (AC), LA URSS (AC), DISGUISE (OP), PUNK PYRAMID (AC), Q (OP)

COMMUNITY

Interview and introduction by Ellis Jones. Photos provided by Miff Pleasant.

Community formed in late 2015, when Ben mentioned to his friends Claire and Tash that he wanted to try singing in a hardcore band, rather than playing drums as he usually does. They found a "baby" Paddy to play drums—Tash's words, not mine—and since then they've been playing regularly in Sheffield and around UK. After putting out a demo, in May 2017, Community released a 7" which has been well received by fans and newcomers alike. I interviewed them next door to the Lughole—which as well as being their practice space is also a thriving DIY venue, and home of the Kids Of The Lughole label / distro—in the Lord Nelson, a pub which had recently been re-modelled in a style somewhere between an austere family dining room and a hotel sauna. The majority of the pub crowd were focused on the TV showing the football scores coming in, and our interview was interrupted by cheers from Paddy and Claire whenever it showed a goal for Sheffield Wednesday (which fortunately was only twice). We talked about "community" of various kinds; about Sheffield punk, past and present; and about gaining friendship and confidence through making music.

MRR: Already it seems like Community, as a name, is a word that comes up in normal conversation loads. Have you ruined the word for yourself?

Ben: I really wanted to call it Community. I've been in bands before that have just had terrible names that we regret after two weeks—I just wanted a name that I already hated, and that was a totally overused word, that could be applied so widely. It's used in gross policy-speak. And, like, "the punk community" is kind of a piss-take as well—it's a facetious name.

Claire: It's an un-Googleable entity.

MRR: That's what I've been learning.

Tash: It does end up being a bit silly sometimes. Like, any time you see a poster with the word "community" on it, a picture gets taken—which is every single day. It's funny how the name translates differently to different people. We just see it as a bit of a piss-take, but my mum is like "Oh, it's such a lovely name!"

MRR: Is it cynical? Is that the intention?

Ben: Maybe not cynical. Maybe playful. It's not a pun on the punk community, like, to say that there's no such thing, because we'd all say, certainly in Sheffield, that the DIY community is really tight-knit and really amazing.

Claire: It's really important in this city.

MRR: In terms of the punk community in Sheffield, then, what are the bands and venues that make up that community?

Claire: I think at the moment, the big-hitters are the Lughole next door, Audacious Art Experiment up the street, and Delicious Clam. There was one over here [points outside] that got knocked down—Tye Die Tapes, which we absolutely loved.

Tash: We recorded there.

Paddy: Yeah I started putting on gigs there when I was like nineteen. And they knocked it down in August to build a car park.

Claire: And then, for bands, there's so many. And my favorite one just died, Sievehead.

Tash: Yeah that's why I'm wearing this [Sievehead badge] in mourning for the entire week.

Ben: Nachthexen. They're playing a lot at the moment in support of their new record.

Claire: I think Pudge are playing their last-ever gig again soon.

Tash: That's an old band. There used to be quite a scene for that gruff and pop punk stuff. And Pudge used to be like, the big ones, in terms of that. They've broken up and done a reunion gig a fair few times, and it's happening again now.

MRR: Does that mean you've stopped caring about their reunions?

Claire: No way!

Tash: No, it's always amazing. Just songs about boozing and having chippy tea.

Ben: Yeah, they were the big band here when I moved to Sheffield. I moved here as the scene was moving out of pubs and into self-run spaces that people were practicing in and putting on gigs in. And the space I guess I'm more involved in—Audacious Art Experiment—set up in 2010. It's just been so amazing having that here, like having spaces where people can get together and start a new band. I think it would be much more difficult, without them, to experiment with different people and stuff. Like Nachthexen wouldn't have happened. The Repossessed would never have happened.

Claire: That's another thing about the punk community. Without the people around me, I would never have picked up a guitar, and I would never have learned as quickly as I did. Having my friends around me going "No, you can do it, you're fine, you've got this," even when I was really crappy, gave me loads of encouragement.

Tash: And Leah from your band [the Repossessed] had never played drums before. When we did my other band Howl, I felt like there weren't really any other bands in the Sheffield punk community that had women in them, and you guys were starting, and then Nachthexen came up as well. And I feel like everyone was like "oh my god," and were so stoked to hear these people. It was like, all these people are suddenly doing all this stuff. And then the more...not to be like, oh, we influenced everybody, but...

Claire: I think we all influenced each other.

Tash: I think that was quite a cool time, because now you look around and there's so many women doing stuff, and it's all totally different.

Ben: There's kind of a transitional thing going on at the moment, 'cause Sievehead and Skiplickers, they were another big Sheffield band, just played their last gig. People from them are all in new bands. Polluted Brain are a new one to watch, they're really good. And Shitneck.

Tash: The D-beat stuff is still going. But the thing about Sheffield is that there's everything, and most cities seem to have a "thing." For example, Leicester is known for having Spazz-influenced bands.

Ben: Sheffield was super D-beat when I moved here, proper crusty.

MRR: How would you describe your sound?

Tash: Some slow songs, some fast songs.

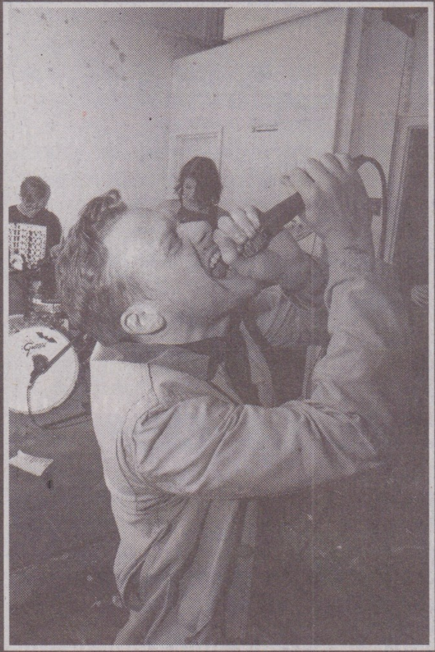
Ben: Some jammers, some ragers. There are some that do really slow down. Like Tash-led Joy Division riff-style things. And there are some that are like, Posi Claire's straightedge hardcore influence. Like Bay Area thrash style.

Claire: I can't help myself.

Tash: Are we, Community, representative of the punk community in Sheffield? Like, are we varied in that way?

Ben: I think, yeah, everyone's put their own elements to it so it doesn't really sound like any of those things,

ALEX FERGUSON



but those ideas are maybe what will start a song off.

Tash: It's never been discussed, has it? It's like, we want to be in a hardcore punk band.

Paddy: Ben, you might have said a few bands at the time.

Tash: Yeah like maybe the stuff Ben mentioned in the first practice, i was really into that at the time. So like the kind of weirdo New York stuff, which is quite bassy I guess, but with cool riffs and catchy choruses. And that fits because Claire writes those kind of catchy things on guitar.

Ben: We were all listening to a lot of Ajax when we started, who are really influenced by Totalitär, so there's this like Totalitär through a New York lens sort of theme...but I don't think we sound like either of those bands!

MRR: So do you write together in the practice room?

Claire: Yeah. Tash and I riff off each other, and Paddy just magically ties it together with drums, and then Ben has these awesome vocals he sticks over the top, and then it just comes together.

Paddy: No one's ever come with a full tune, like: "play this." It's nice.

Tash: And it keeps progressing, like even tonight in practice Paddy added a new drum intro to a song we've had for ages, and we all went 'yeah!', so...

Paddy: I'm trying to give every tune a drum fill intro.

Ben: The lyrics, there's no chorus or anything, they're just stream of consciousness. I'll splat them out and then go back through and edit a bit, and that's about it.

MRR: Maybe rather than asking you, Ben, what the lyrics are about, I might ask the others. What are his lyrics about?

Claire: There's...one about a raven? There's one about soiling yourself.

Tash: Political annoyance?

Claire: And stuff that's gotten on Ben's nerves, when he's been at work and stuff. Things that have been frustrating.

Tash: Err...[pause] oh god, we're awful.

Paddy: I could be wrong but it is about your struggle around your place in society, in terms of how you fit into the picture?

Tash: I feel it's stuff that pisses you off, and that can be anything, like a shitty boss, to **wider political** issues.

Ben: "The Raven" is about the first pub job I had, when I was like fifteen. It was a pub with delusions of grandeur, and had a head chef who was just an awful bully. Just working there and being like...this guy is twice my age, taking his anger out, physically sometimes, on fucking kids that were working there. I hated that place.

Tash: And about the punk community as well, actually.

Ben: Oh, "Community." That's about social media and, you know, just seeing the neggy side of it: a weird, cloistered, image-obsessed side of it, rather than the liberating potential of it. And what Pads was saying is totally right, about a couple of them as well, that are about trying not to be a shit human in a world that kind of molds you to be a shit human. And yeah, just hating work and the culture of work. And hating magicians! Fuck magic.

MRR: Why magicians?

Ben: Because it's not magic! The people who do magic have spent ages and ages on their own, perfecting this one sleight of hand thing, and it's like...that's not magic. And it quite often comes in a package of being sleazy with it, and invading your personal space, trying to mack on people with magic.

MRR: It seems to me like a lot of the songs were angry at other people, but then also at yourself, and at your friends, and they end up being pretty even-handed? Like, you're saying there's no one outside of this system.

Ben: Yeah, absolutely. Some of the lyrics, like there's one called "Kids" that's about like what the fuck we're all doing—loads of them are about consumerism or working all the time, and not really kicking back hard enough against society, but feeling powerless to do that, like where do you start? Everyone's as guilty as me. In my life, and I think even with work since I was about twenty, I've tried to have as positive an impact on the world as possible, but it doesn't always feel like that's necessarily possible. I'm not trying to be a dick to my friends; they are dead inspiring people. The whole experience of playing in this band is like, most of the lyrics are really neggy, but the experience of playing and being with these people, I love them, I love it. Like I think we're even-handed, we're not that posi. Well, apart from Posi Claire, who, as the name would suggest, is pretty posi.

MRR: What would you want the listener to get out of it?
Ben: Maybe like, feeling dirty and then getting catharsis from it? Just like, entertaining these thoughts I guess. But then again, I don't wanna suggest that I've got any hot takes or fresh ideas or whatever. That's also part of it, like coming to terms with your own mediocrity and the fact that you're not amazing. All you can do is what you can.

MRR: Have you toured much outside of Sheffield?
Ben: No, we haven't played that often 'cause we're all on different time frames, everyone's got so many life moves going on. But we've done weekenders and stuff.
Paddy: The weekend we did with Human Certainty and Hex was really fun.
Claire: That gig in York was mental.

MRR: What about it?
Ben: The shirtless mosh is alive in York.
Claire: It was wild. People are just into everything in York. I love York.
Tash: Yeah, when people say about touring Southeast Asia, and they always say it's amazing because any band that plays, people get so stoked on it—that's what York is like.
Claire: So if you have a trip to Southeast Asia cancel it, because you're wasting your money. Just go to York.

MRR: Is there a show you'd say is the best show you've had?
Paddy: The 7" release show was fun.
Ben: Yeah that was my favorite.
Claire: My favourite show was Bonj's [Ben's] birthday. The birthday cake came out as we were playing and it was awesome.
Tash: Mid-song. Mid-"Community" by Community. I love playing Chunk, in Leeds. Everyone always seems really stoked for us, and they never fail to say that. And it's nice that people still think, it'll make them feel cool if I tell them.
Claire: I think that's so important, you know, to tell people when you enjoyed their band.

MRR: Sometimes it's hard to behave when you're watching your friends' bands the same as you would a band you really like? Even if you really like your friends band, it can be hard to get yourself into that head-space?
Claire: I'm into some good habits now. So if I see it, I say it, and I think it's really important in all aspects of life. I mean like, say you're watching a band and you enjoy it, I think it's really important to tell people that you enjoyed it. And if you like how someone is, or something that someone's said to you, or what someone's wearing even, I think you should say. It makes them feel nice!
Tash: And sometimes it's hard to accept it, I've definitely been there.
Claire: And it's very difficult to accept it. Something that all of us do, to a degree, is when you've finished playing is you just wanna walk out of the room, and just compose yourself. And it's a bad habit I think—it's important to accept that praise and those nice comments. You think they're being polite, but actually they're saying it because they want to say it, because they enjoyed it, and you should be pleased.
Ben: Sometimes it's draining, though, after a show. Like, it's good to play but you just wanna fuck off. And also, confronting negative emotions pretty publicly for fifteen minutes, and being everyone in the audience's little dancing boy I get really sweaty, so I don't necessarily like interacting with people afterwards.

MRR: Anything else to say? Anything you want to ask each other?
Tash: I want to ask Paddy, do you think about playing drums as little as it seems?
Ben: [laughter]
Tash: No, I mean like it just seems to come out naturally. It seems like you just know. Or do you sit at home working it out?
Paddy: I think that because I've been playing drums so long—I've been playing drums longer than I haven't been playing drums, since I was about nine—I think everything comes naturally now. I think that's a good thing to do though, to play whatever comes naturally. So when someone's playing a riff, I just play the first thing that comes to my head.
Claire: And ten out of ten times it fits.
Paddy: If it looks like I'm not really doing owt it's just cos I'm trying to be relaxed, so I can play faster. That's the tip—to be zen.

MRR: What would you each say you've got out of being in the band? Or, what do you enjoy the most?
Claire: It's definitely improved my playing, and made me feel more confident as a musician. But it's also given me three cool, good friends, who I really enjoy hanging out with and spending time with. Like we'll go for food together, and hang out together, and we dub tapes together, and it's just a nice experience.
Ben: Also confidence. Standing up in front of people. I'm a bit shy normally.
Tash: There's a lot of encouragement in this band. That firstly, you're not useless, secondly...
Claire: Of course you're not useless!
Tash: That secondly, having a bad set, or being in a weird mood, or cancelling practice—none of it matters. Being supported in that way, means it's like nothing's a big deal.
Claire: Tash'll come to me and be like "oh my god I messed up so bad," and I'll be like "oh yeah, I messed up like five times," it's cool.
Tash: So yeah the support means I feel more confident, means I can think yeah, I'm not completely useless at this instrument, even though I taught myself. You're confident and you're capable, and even if you're crap, it really doesn't matter. And obviously that links into your life outside of being in a band.

MRR: It seems like you're not a band that puts pressure on itself by being aspirational. You're not chasing after anything.
Claire: From the beginning we were very clear about what the band was—it was an opportunity to hang out, have fun, to play some gigs together and see where it went.
Ben: I think we knew from the beginning that it was just something we wanted to try. And I'm so stoked with how it's turned out.

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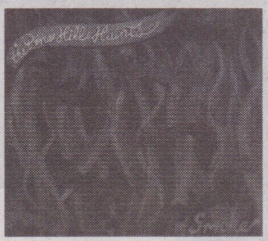

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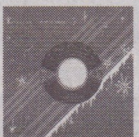

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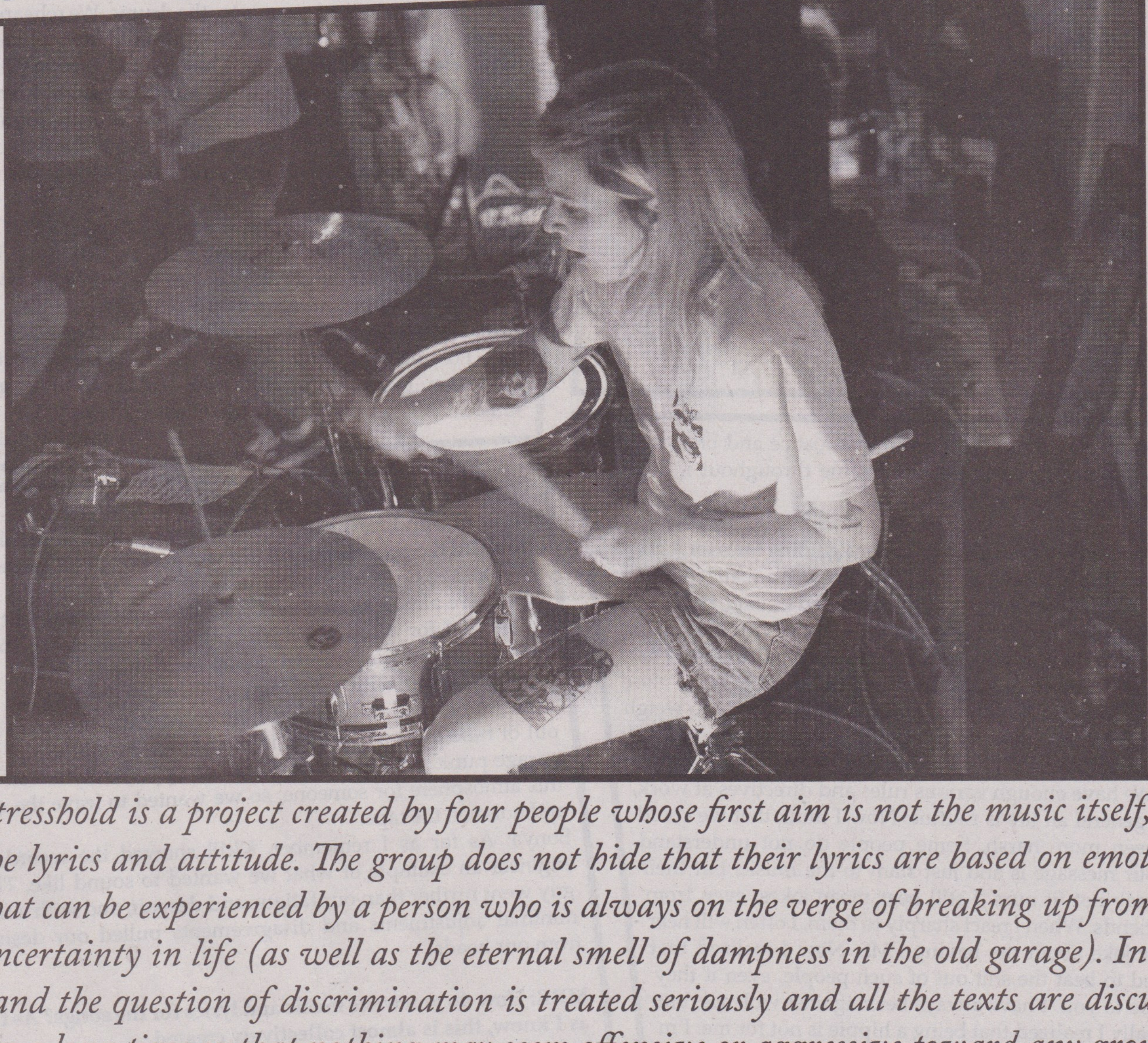
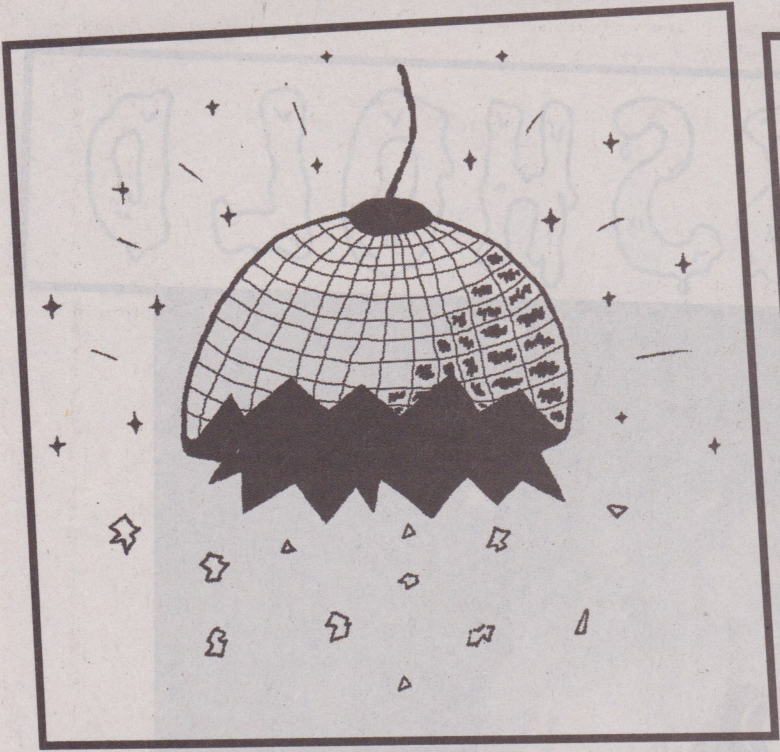
STRESSHOLD



Stresshold is a project created by four people whose first aim is not the music itself, but the lyrics and attitude. The group does not hide that their lyrics are based on emotions that can be experienced by a person who is always on the verge of breaking up from the uncertainty in life (as well as the eternal smell of dampness in the old garage). In this band the question of discrimination is treated seriously and all the texts are discussed for a long time so that nothing may seem offensive or aggressive toward any group of people. The words "there is no place for homophobia, sexism, racism and other kinds of discrimination" can be heard at all of their concerts. Unlike most of the bands in Russia, they think it is important to repeat this statement before each of their gig. They were surprised by this interview request largely because they are mostly invisible in the Russian scene (perhaps because the band does not have social media accounts).

Interview and introduction by Nikolay Kemaykin. Photos by Orange Fox.



MRR: How did the band Stresshold start? Did you play in any bands before Stresshold and how did you get together?

Katia: I met our guitarist Kirill two years ago when I was trying to set up a completely female band with my girlfriend, but that band fell apart because we could not rehearse regularly. Kirill came to our rehearsals to the garage. After one of the rehearsals, he said that he had written some music and suggested that we try to play together. I agreed and we began to sort the songs out in the garage under the eye of his friend Gleb, who helped me master the drums. We rehearsed together that whole winter and then decided it was time to search for a vocalist and bassist. They made a post in punk-related internet groups and at the audition asked them to play "Magnet" by Bikini Kill with us. We quickly found a bassist, Sonya, who I already knew through the Moscow hardcore initiative Dark Horse. And I invited her to come to our rehearsal.

As for the name, I noticed the word Stresshold in the popular words of the week at Urban Dictionary and suggested is as our band name. Before that we had a bunch of wacky names but we agreed on Stresshold.

Kirill: I once played in a band called Yeltsin Youth.

Den: For me, Stresshold started with a random post on Instagram. I saw one where it was said about looking for musicians for a band, with the hashtags "riot_grrrl" and "Feminist_punk." I wanted to play music and given that justice and breaking the stereotypes have been important for me throughout my life, I decided to give them a try.

MRR: Were there any bands that became guiding lines for you?

Katia: We did not have any guiding lines. We realized that in Russia the term feminism is not approved of and people are afraid to use it, but for me this was the main guideline. The patriarchal system is very convenient to capitalism (and I hate capitalism!) as well as cops. I wanted the band to be as close to my inner world as possible and I wanted nobody to weigh upon me. In the band there is an implicit agreement that everyone behaves as they want and does everything as they see it. We have enough various rules and directives at work, and in general all life is routine. Now I think that we could have been more harsh. Some people do not understand what our message is and just slam to the music, but their ideas may not fit ours. I still hear mean jokes, even from close friends. When I react sharply to them, I often will hear another joke about me having PMS. Now I realized that we need to beat the shit out of such people, even if they are close to you. I have always been against violence, but eventually I realized that being a hippie is not for me. I'm open to dialogue, but you don't have to spend much time to understand how such a person positions himself.

Sonya: Undoubtedly, each of us has favorite styles as far as songwriting goes that have deepened into consciousness, but we try to maintain an original sound, leaving it clear and driving at the same time.

Kirill: One thing I can say for sure is that everyone here likes Nirvana.

Den: At the run-through we had to play a song by Bikini Kill, so maybe the initial hint was in this direction, but then everything got its own course. A damp garage on the outskirts of Moscow did its job. This was reflected on our sound as well as really determined our style.

MRR: Tell us about your first record. Did you have any ideas in mind how the record should sound in the end? How did the process go and did you get what you intended after all?

Katia: We almost understood how it should sound, but we knew that for a record which costs 3000 rubles, we could count only on the sounds of our instrument. We did not want to bother with retuning our instruments because we understood that we like our atmosphere and idea. We fell out of tune most of the time in the garage, so that's why it's garage punk. And recording is just an opportunity to convey this atmosphere for someone, so we wanted to leave the dirt and noise on the tape.

Sonya: As far as I remember, Kirill showed the recording engineer an example of what we wanted to sound like. This guy went further than our fatigue and despair, and with a few minimal adjustments and disagreements pulled our desires from our heads.

MRR: How do you write music and lyrics for the songs? As far as I know, this is almost collectively created.

Katia: Kirill writes the guitar parts and shows us, then we come up with the drums and bass, and then write the words. The lyrics are discussed together, there are lyrics which were written by me and Kirill and Sonya and edited together. This is important for us.

MRR: You recently did your first tour and released a tour tape / record. Tell me more about how the tour went.

Katia: At first it was damn stressful, because we set off so abruptly, but everything was a blast! To be honest, I did not expect anything special from the tour, as the tour happened by chance and many things were not up to us. There was one show that we missed because of one of the supporting acts. We refused to play because we did not like one band's sexist cover. There were also some weird gigs where they could have potentially involved the Nazis. Political indifference is very common in the scene. We received some messages that said that we had canceled the concert there in vain, but none of their arguments could convince us to change our minds. There was a sense of some sadness and lack of understanding of what to do now and where to go from there. But by the end of the week, I was already very comfortable and having fun.

On the tour tape, we just recorded the intro and our two newest songs. We recorded another cool song, but we did not have time to finish it. We just recorded it quickly in the garage, so the tape is a messy noise.

After the tour, we decided to take a break and to work on new material. If we do perform then it will be rarely and at gigs that are comfortable for us. To me, Stresshold is more about the idea and the concept more than it is about music. We are not some kind of red-hot musicians and I'm not Dave Grohl. I try to create and arrange my drum parts based around certain details and not through sheer technical skill. I try to create and arrange my drum parts based around certain simple details and not through sheer technical skill. We have not yet reached the vision for the band that we used to have, but this is close enough to it.

Sonya: Personally for me, this tour seems to be something mythical. Not only did we never feel sick of each other, but we also get back home without almost any incidents. The tape was recorded the day before the departure in our temple of mold (also known as our garage). Kirill recorded it on top of some old tapes, made the covers, and boxed them up. In general, everything was in the spirit of urban neurasthenics: people worn out from desperately trying to express themselves to the fullest in a place that does not welcome such expression.

Kirill: In all the cities we went to they like to mosh. [*laughter*]

Den: The tour, especially for me, was the first in every sense—almost like losing my virginity. [*laughter.*] It was an event of a lifetime for me. Even now, it's not possible for me to convey all the emotions and the fullness of this feeling. This was an unforgettable experience.

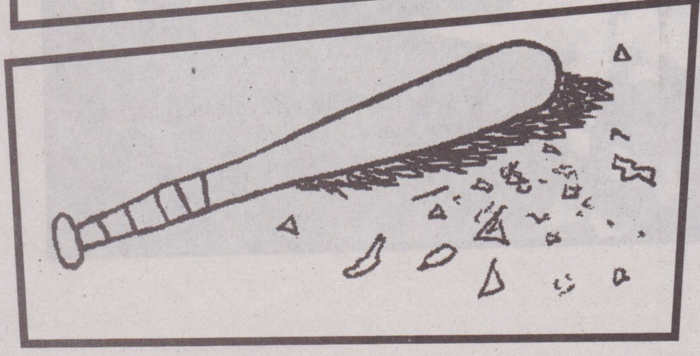
MRR: Who is involved in decorating the t-shirts? How important is graphic design to you? Can you give examples of some of your favorite album covers?

Katia: It's Kirill who draws everything in Microsoft Paint, except for the album cover design. We don't spend money on Illustrator. Design is very important. I consider successful all the covers of Minor Threat, G.L.O.S.S. and Bikini Kill.

Sonya: The cover of the first and only album we borrowed from the photo artist Masha Svyatogor. As for Kirill's other designs...I don't know how much he likes what he did, but it all makes me feel scrupulous delight.

MRR: You as a band is not on any social networks. Why?

Katia: We are too lazy to have them. If you have them, then you become too open for a direct dialogue with the listener, and this can lead us astray from our concept. We don't want anyone to interfere with it at all. Yes, now everyone lives on the internet, but the least I want to do is to transfer my energy regarding Stresshold there. On the internet, someone is always wrong. In general, now everything is going to the net. You may not even have to leave your house watching online all the broadcasts, it all tears away from reality. And at times when you need to act you are paralyzed, because you forget how to react in a critical situation because you spent so much time lying on a sofa with a bag of chips and watching the Maidan, for example.



Sonya: To some, it's paranoia, to others, it's social phobia. In general, it doesn't matter. In the world of information chaos, the methods of obtaining information take retrospective forms, and the rumor mill sometimes works better than surfing through thousands of links in social networks.

Den: We consider ourselves to be underground, so it's not for us to get scattered on the net. Our creativity is not really in demand, so this format suits us the most. Although, to be honest, we have a bandcamp account, doesn't that count?

MRR: Are there bands close to you in spirit? There are rumors that even in Moscow it can happen that there is no one to play with.

Katia: Probably there are some, but seems like we don't know about them. It's hard to find friends here. You ask about the bands.

Sonya: If we're talking about the idea, then maybe one can find many guys with some similar messages. The main thing is that the company should be good.

Den: *No.*

MRR: I noticed that you are one of the few bands that continue to speak from the stage about things that you care about. At the last concerts, you even gave a manifesto. How important is it to continue speaking from the stage about some problems, when people come to have fun or generally do not want to listen?

Katia: We assumed that people would come to dance to our music, but I see it more as an emotional splash of everything that does not suit you, let it be teenager's discontent. I know very few bands in Russia who speak. There are bands that speak, but it would be better if they were silent. All people are like mirrors, we can't say that we create ourselves as we are the reflection of all and the whole world, therefore it's important to carry some kind of message and philosophy. My philosophy today is mixed with the fact that with age I become more introverted, although in my youth I was the life of the party. Two years ago panic attacks and depression came. I won't deceive anyone—it's now hard for me to carry a positive message to people. And I think it's OK to tell people sad and gloomy things and remind of where we were born and where we exist now. Most likely, our generation will not see any positive changes, but we can sow the seeds of these changes. In general, Stresshold is a call to be ready to act if you are constantly being pressed.

Sonya: Strangely enough, there's a feeling that the audience is made up of two disparate groups: aging punks, able to listen; and young people, constantly looking for something to catch on.

Den: In my opinion, the monologues between songs have the same deep message as the songs themselves, and the manifesto is an attempt to put together our visions of the world into a single picture. Of course, everyone comes to the concerts for their own reason. There's someone to get acquainted with the bands' work; someone just looking for a distraction from their daily routine, or to rest; someone just for the company. I am pleased to realize that when a "kitchen sexist" or "mom's xenophobe" who accidentally wandered off the concert and heard us, something can click in their heads and they will be able to reveal the boundaries of his awareness and consciousness.

Kirill: I just want to play and get lost in the experience. [*laughter*]

MRR: I have already said that Stresshold's music brings me associations with the nervous reaction of a person tortured by a megapolis. What do these songs mean to you personally?

Katia: You answered this question yourself. This is a complete reflection of us. At least I can compare myself to this band and say that it best expresses my world. I won't say that the band is an outlet for me. After each performance, I feel devastated, and before the performance I drink sedatives. My constant goal is to get out of the comfort zone, cuz if you get used to it, then you become a vegetable.

Den: Our songs are inner experiences, inner protest that break out, this is our loud *no* to prejudices and other shit stuck in the medieval minds of our time.

MRR: Tell me the most ridiculous or sad, in general the most memorable story from your tour!

Sonya: On the road, we were stopped by cops who told us that we had violated the driving regulations (which we did in fact violate). We had no money and it was early in the morning, so the cops were satisfied with the money for just two cups of cappuccino and let us go.

Katia: The funny thing is that they wanted to get a bribe or take our bass player's driving license. They asked for thirty bucks, but we had no money, from the whole car we managed to find only about ten bucks so we told them we had no money.

The most memorable moment for me was a concert in the city of Kirov where there were lots of bands and they all looked like punks from the late '70s. They played very hard music and all of their sets lasted 50 minutes each, and we play at most for 15 minutes. We played the last set of the night and the people abruptly died down. The weather was gloomy, we just wandered around the city and ripped off the banner of the local dolphinarium, I cleaned up the shelves in the local supermarket.

MRR: Do you have any plans for the band?

Katia: "There will come a day when the whole street will be broken glass."

Sonya: Is it possible to plan tomorrow at all?

Kirill: Yes, now we are composing new songs and looking for someone who would put them on a 7".

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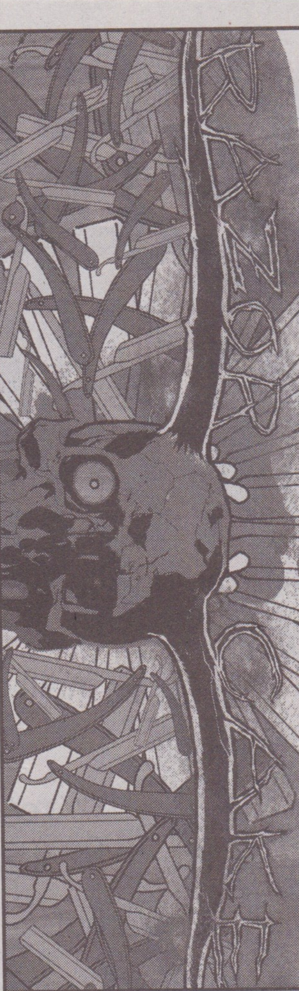

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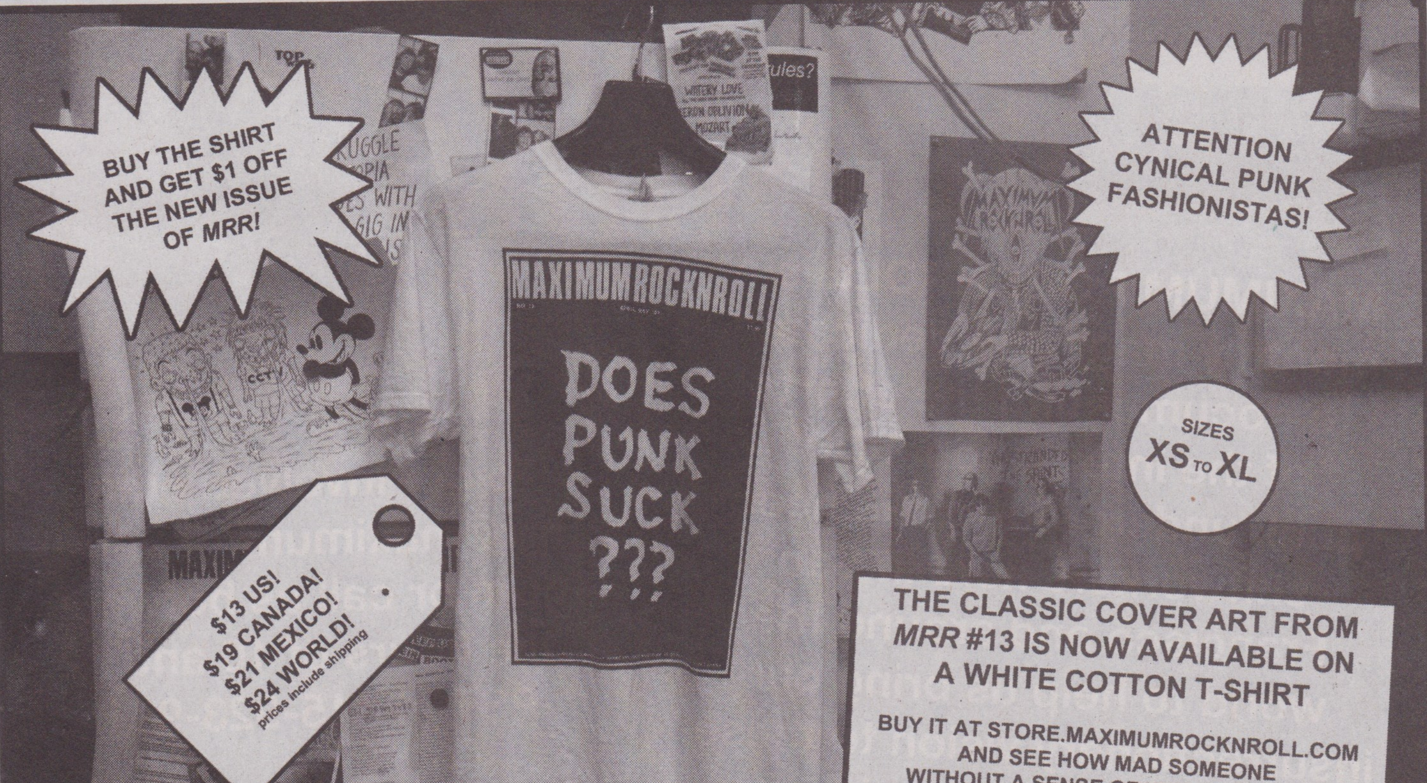
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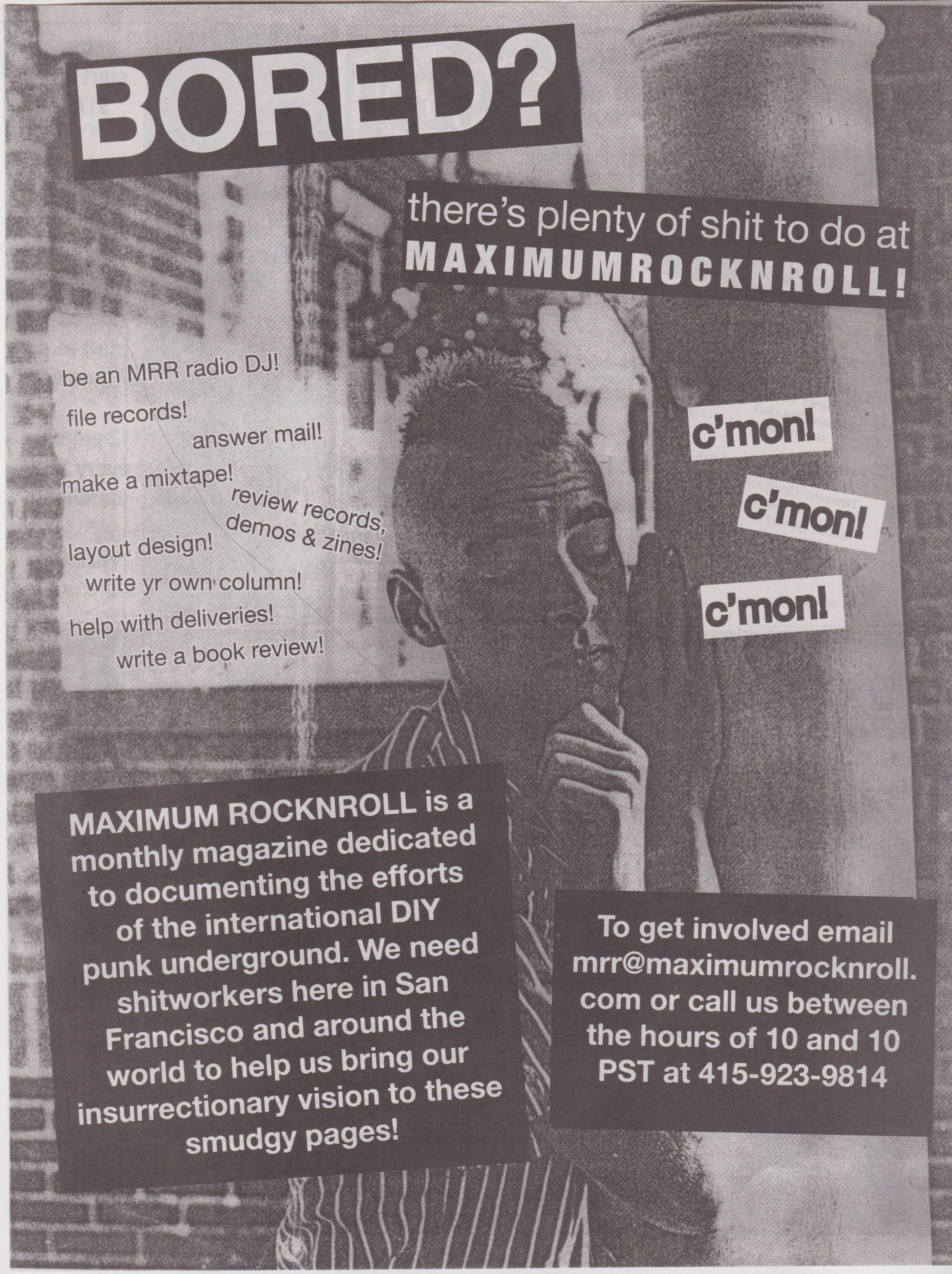

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Willie "LOCO" Alexander

Interview and introduction by Garrett Caples. Photos courtesy Willie Alexander's Archives.

Born in 1943, the same year as George Harrison and Mick Jagger, Willie "Loco" Alexander is a self-described "second-generation rocker," the generation to emerge in the immediate wake of Chuck Berry, Bo Diddley, Eddie Cochran, and Elvis Presley. A fixture of the Boston rock scene from its inception, the singer and keyboardist is most famous for the infamous: being a member of the 1971 post-Lou Reed, Doug Yule-led touring iteration of the Velvet Underground. But this stint accounts for a mere six months of his life, and in truth Alexander's career has spanned the entirety of rock'n'roll, always in the mix of major label music and underground glory, yet never scoring even the one hit of the one-hit wonder. His résumé extends from mid-'60s garage band the Lost to his late '70s leadership of the proto-punk CBGB-era Boom Boom Band to his '80s tenure on French label New Rose Records alongside rock auteurs like Alex Chilton, Johnny Thunders, and Roky Erickson.

Mainstream success eluded him, and at this point in his career as an artist, he's long since abandoned its pursuit in favor of following his own peculiar muse. Since leaving New Rose in the early '90s, Alexander has continued to release increasingly individual and eccentric music on small labels, often enough his own Fisheye Records. Working with a variety of backing bands like the Fishtones, the Raztones, and the Persistence of Memory Orchestra, Alexander has expanded his repertoire to include elements of jazz, spoken word, even hip-hop. His most recent CD with the Fishtones, I'll Be Goode, incorporates lo-fi drum loops and samples, often enough made by Alexander himself; unlike many musicians of his vintage, he has rolled with the times and these days most frequently builds his music in the studio, hip-hop style, instead of recording already-written material.

In recent years, having settled in the old fishing town of Gloucester, MA—home to a brace of significant American poets like Gerrit Lansing, Vincent Ferrini, and, most famously, Charles Olson—Alexander has become a regular at the Gloucester Writers Center, run by Ferrini's nephew Henry. Having long turned to poetry for inspiration, Alexander has begun fashioning songs from the works of such poets, going so far as to record a whole album of Vincent Ferrini's Greatest Hits. More recently, he turned a poem by Lansing into "All Things Go," a 6/8 dirge of tremolo guitar, drums, and horns that opens I'll Be Goode. When I reached him by phone for this interview earlier this year, he was in the middle of reworking an old John Greenleaf Whittier poem he remembered as a hymn from his childhood. While he never had a hit record, Alexander's led a remarkable life as a musician, able to constantly evolve at an age where most of his peers have fossilized in relation to their art.

MRR: You're listening to the first rock'n'roll records as a preteen in the mid-fifties, but how does American rock'n'roll change by the end of the decade?
Willie Alexander: After '58, things went south. Chuck Berry was in jail, they stopped playing Jerry Lee Lewis, Little Richard had quit and gone into the ministry. The Brill Building came in and they were manufacturing heroes for us kids, like Fabian or Frankie Avalon. I didn't think that stuff was so hot.

MRR: What brought you back to rock?
It just happened because the music got better. The Rolling Stones and the Beatles had just came out. They were on television and we were like, "Wow, what's this?" They were playing Chuck Berry and Bo Diddley songs—the stuff that turned me on. They were throwing our own music back at us. It opened it up to the roots again. They're basically using Everly Brothers harmonies and stuff.

The Lost was my first band. We started playing in 1964. Those were guys I met up at Goddard College, up in Burlington, VT. We had original songs; I had just started writing songs. But we had to fill out—in those days you had to play three or four sets a night, so we did covers too. We were doing some Beatles, some Stones, some Kinks., as well as Bo Diddley and Chuck Berry.

That was three years, '64, '65, '66. Three years was the longest for any band I was in ever for a while, until Persistence of Memory, which I started in the early '90s. With the Lost, we were living together; that's the way it was in the early '60s. As the decades grew, musicians could be in three or four bands; it wasn't like, this is the shot right here. We're going to live together, we're going to do this. It was all a new ballgame back then and we were all playing it by ear.

MRR: Were there any particularly memorable gigs when the Lost was on Capitol?
Willie: The biggest tour we ever did was an East Coast thing; we toured with the Beach Boys because we were on the same label. We did maybe fifteen dates, mostly colleges and some theatres. It was us, then there was a comedy act, and then the Beach Boys. This is when they were still just four guys in striped shirts and white pants. Brian was at home. Bruce Johnston had replaced him. The friendliest Beach Boy was the drummer, Dennis; he came over and hung out with us. And in fact, the last show that we did with them, Dennis couldn't play; Dennis was sick. So our drummer played with them. He got to play up on Dennis's drum riser and they gave him $100. We all went out to Howard Johnson's and had a steak dinner after that one. That was fun. Carl was kinda running the show then. He was the little brother but he had the whole thing on his shoulders. I loved a lot of their music even though they were West Coast. Being an East Coast guy, you'd be like, "Ah these West Coast bands, Jefferson Airplane, Country Joe, they sucked!" It's the Rascals and the Remains and it's like, "We're harder than they are."

MRR: What was your next move after the Lost broke up?
After the Lost, I decided to play drums and I was in a band called the Grass Menagerie. The problem with that band was we kept changing members; guys would drop out, so you'd have to teach some new guy the songs. That really sucked after a while. That's where I met Doug Yule; he came through that band.

MRR: Did the Grass Menagerie record?
Grass Menagerie recorded some demos for Vanguard Records in NYC. They put us in the Chelsea Hotel, because it was right across the street. So I got to sit on the roof in the rain, like, "I'm gonna write some great shit here, here I am at the Chelsea Hotel." It already had a vibe, back in '67. Nothing ever really happened with those tapes; it was our management holding out for a better deal. That happens with a lot of bands. They were waiting for a deal worthy of their constituency or whatever. We're going to hold out for something better and then something better doesn't come along, or by then the band's broken up. It's a fleeting thing, a lot of these bands.

MRR: Your next band is a sort of curveball in your career, a mixed-race soul review called the Bagatelle; how did that band come about?
Willie: The Bagatelle was 1968. I left Cambridge to join them and lived in New York. Tom Wilson was our producer. He's the guy who put out Sun Ra's first records. He's the guy who recorded Dylan's electric stuff. He was a pretty cool cat. I only did two songs with him because I joined this band and they had already recorded 99% of the album [*11 p.m. Saturday*]. The drummer was the drummer from the Lost and he was like, "Willie, you gotta come out to NY and join the band." It's funny because the first night

I met the whole band, we're posing for the album cover and I hadn't even played a note with them.

I loved playing with that band because they had the saxophones and the trumpet; it was a whole new ballgame for me. We played a lot of soul music and we played the Electric Circus. That was a mad place. It was the place where Fellini got inspired for some of *Satyricon*, some of the scenes, from just going to this club. It was really something in New York then.

MRR: How did you end up joining the Velvet Underground?

Willie: Doug Yule found me in '71 and was like, join us and do tours with the Velvet Underground. Walter Powers [from the Lost] was already in the band. The only person I didn't know was Maureen Tucker. That was done in like six months. We did these two tours. We played a week in Vancouver. We played the Midwest and I think we played Montreal. We played some gig, maybe it was Edmonton or some place, with Quicksilver Messenger Service and Captain Beefheart. That was a great gig. I don't remember what we did but Beefheart was playing soprano saxophone; it was like free jazz. It was some kind of huge sports arena, and it just echoed—it was amazing.

MRR: After that, the band went to Europe?

Willie: We were stationed basically in England, and we played mostly colleges all over England; we'd drive up from London every day. It was always foggy on the way back, which I thought was good. I was always scribbling lyrics and I got a lot of good lyrics from writing in those days. Just like Kerouac; I keep that little notebook with me.

It took me years before I could listen to any of that Velvet Underground stuff, because basically I didn't even know those songs. I knew some of the chords. I was just making sounds and I didn't know what I was doing. I was high as a kite and I just trying to hit the chords when I was sure of them. I remember I had to practically beg Doug Yule for anything, as far as song structures go. But a lot of their songs were fairly simple. I wasn't a huge fan of the band before I joined it. I was just playing with some old friends. It wasn't like I was trying to recreate anything that they had done. So I brought a lot of my own stuff in with me and I ended up singing those. And I ended up playing drums behind Mo when she was singing "After Hours."

It was a good time except I didn't get along with their manager. I had a big blow out with him after two days in London because I didn't have enough money to buy a postcard and he's like doling out money for food. So I was like, "What the fuck, man?" and he thought I was crazy and he couldn't deal with me so we never spoke again. The group was pretty friendly with each other but then at some point some of our families came over, girlfriends and stuff, and then we kinda factioned off and lost that sort of tightness. When the tour was over, Mo and Walter and myself, we thought we were going to record with Doug, but we were sent home and he stayed. They got Deep Purple's drummer or somebody and Doug played all the instruments himself. There was an album that was pretty terrible that came out from it. And so it's like, well, there goes the friendship with Doug there, but you know, we're friendly now, I guess. I mean, I don't see him but I think we have spoke or written each other once or twice since then.

MRR: What happened when you returned from Europe?

Willie: After that, the next group was the Radio Hearts. I borrowed a blues band and we became a rock'n'roll band. After that I was doing a solo gig at Sandy's in Beverly, MA and I met the Rhythm Assholes, which is a band that became the Nervous Eaters. Steve Cataldo was the leader

of that band and they were just fantastic, they were playing the primitive boom boom shit. Their heroes, of course, were the Stooges and the Velvet Underground. That's why they even came out to see me in the first place because they had heard I'd played with the Velvet Underground, but they knew about the Lost too.

MRR: Paradoxically, given your various brushes with major labels, your best-known record is probably your self-released debut solo single, "Kerouac" b/w "Mass Ave." How did that come about?
Willie: Jack Griffin was the man who paid for the session. He ran a music store in Cambridge with guitars and amps and he heard I was gonna make a home recording with my "Sound on Sound" Sony tape recorder, which I bought with some of that VU money, about $300. He said, "I'll put Willie in a real studio," and he paid for the session. It was at some guy's house, really. It wasn't in a real studio even. I put the record out on Garage Records, which was really just a post office box in Newtonville, MA. And it was enough; they got a write up on me, a paragraph and a picture and an address for my record in *PopTop* magazine, which was a freebie in all of the Strawberries Records chain. I got orders from everywhere and I would send them all letters, and then they'd come see me when I went on tour with the Boom Booms and I'd become friends with them. I was never one of those guys who didn't want to give autographs or didn't want to talk to people. I was more, "Take me, I'm yours," and they would. Like when I was in San Francisco, I'd be like, "Take me to North Beach! I want to see the Condor Club! Show me City Lights!" I loved touring. I was a mess but...

MRR: How did the Boom Boom Band come together during this period?
Willie: I didn't even really have a band for the "Kerouac" single; I knew a lot of guys in bands so I'd sing a few songs with this band, sing with that band. I'd teach 'em my stuff; I'd do "Kerouac" and "Hit Her wid de Axe." Or "Mass Ave." with this band and that band. Sometimes I'd sing with two bands; I'd sing in Cambridge and then I'd run over to the Rat and sing with another band. One of the managers of one these bands says to me, "Willie, you sleazy bastard, why don't you get your own fucking band?" Then there was this battle of the bands at the Club in Cambridge and I borrowed this band, and we won, so they decided to stay with me. It was a good thing because we sounded great together. That was the Boom Boom Band.

MRR: Willie Alexander and the Boom Boom Band had three tracks on the legendary Boston punk compilation *Live at the Rat* but went on to release two 1978 albums on MCA Records, *Willie Alexander and the Boom Boom Band* and *Meanwhile ... Back in the States*. How did you get signed to MCA?
Willie: This musician and writer Debbie Frost brought Craig Leon to the Rat. And "Kerouac / Mass Ave." was on the jukebox. He said, "Ahhh." He could hear the jingling of something. So we went to New York and we played CBGBs and Max's Kansas City, and the guy took us and said, "I'll get you a deal." He got us a deal. He actually got the best deal for himself, as I found out later. But there's no hard feelings about any of that stuff. He got that record on MCA and it went all around the world. They put different covers on it in France, in Germany, and Japan. Not every record label could do that. At that point, we went from underground to overground in a big way. It went from having nothing to have two semis full of equipment. And light men and soundmen and all of that all of a sudden, and management, and record deals and $300 in your pocket after having 79 cents.

Craig, he never really even saw us live, and that was unfortunate, because he didn't know how we really were. He was an interesting producer. He's got his name on Suicide, and the Ramones, and *Live at CBGB's.* Basically he was like this classical prodigy kid who somehow landed in NY and got into the whole CBGB thing. He's got a great ear. We didn't agree on everything. When we recorded, he'd do the bass and the drums first, and then two weeks of 10,000 guitar overdubs, a week of vocals and this and that.

I think some of our best recordings were the live ones. Like the *Live at the Rat* ones. Those are the best ones.

I mean, I like "Looking Like a Bimbo" and "Rock n Roll '78." There's a couple of things on that first album that came out really great. I had a problem with the sound sometimes but I can dig it more now than then. But it was totally different. He didn't know what he was doing with us.

MRR: Any interesting memories from your stint as a major label artist?

Willie: With the Boom Booms, the guy who was managing us was the guy who found Boston and put them on the map and made millions with them, Charlie MacKenzie. And then they got rid of him because he was too hard to handle and a big coke guy; it was old school, when they were giving out satin jackets and stuff like that to promo men and there was a lot of blow going around. I wasn't into the blow too much, though I tried everything. When I wasn't throwing bottles and breaking glass and kicking over tables, we got along pretty good. I remember he brought us to this restaurant because one of Miles Davis's ex-wives was the maitre d'. She was on maybe one or two of his album covers. That was a perk of success.

I met James Brown once. And my manager said, "This is Willie Alexander; he just got a deal with MCA records and do you have any advice for him?" And he looked at me, and he put his arm around me and he said, "Just be yourself, Willie," which was perfect, you know? Unfortunately, I passed out on the table all over the Boston press before he took the stage that night so I didn't get to see him perform. But they got some good quotes out of me before I hit the table. Meeting James Brown was an absolute thrill. It's like meeting Mt. Rushmore; it's like meeting the president of the United States.

I met Jerry Lee Lewis once. My friend Andy Paley, he produced a record for Jerry Lee, and got me into a couple of shows and I got to meet him. It's like, "Holy fuck, I'm never gonna wash this hand again." These are the guys who turned me on and made me start playing. I still get a thrill singing this stuff. If that thrill goes away I'm gonna stop. It's like still exciting doing a Bo Diddley song. The stuff meant a lot to me when I was a teenager and it still does, it still holds up.

MRR: After MCA, you spent a decade making records for French label New Rose Records; how did you hook up with them?

Willie: In a post-Boom Boom Band conversation in Paris with my friend Joe Viglione, aka "The Count," New Rose's founder Patrick Mathé asked him, "What's Willie doing?" Joe told him, "Willie's recording a solo album." Patrick said, "Tell Willie I'll put it out!" *Solo Loco* came out in 1981 and then I toured France in 1982 with the Confessions. Then he put out a live double album from that tour. He put out five more of my albums in the '80s. He even had Bo Diddley on his label. Later in the '90s, he put out a 45 of me and some CDs on Last Call Records, and he even put out the Boom Boom Band reunion record, *Dog Bar Yacht Club*.

I toured over in France every couple of years, some times solo, for him. It was always amazing for me to be in this land of R&B (Rimbaud and Baudelaire) and André Breton. Patrick bought me French editions of Kerouac books; it was all good! Of course whenever I'd ask how my latest record was doing, he'd always say, "It's a masterpiece, Willie, but unfortunately it's only sold a few thousand copies." But he kept putting out my music. I'm grateful for the great times I still have there. I like meeting fans and eating great food and being in a different world, the old world and not prefab America. They know my history over there, even the Lost. It's unreal.

MRR: In the early '90s, you began to move away from a more traditional rock line up with your Persistence of Memory Orchestra; what motivated this decision?
Willie: I've been lucky because I've gotten to work with three amazing guitarists: Billy Loosigian in the Boom Boom Band, the late Matthew Mackenzie in the Confessions, and Rupert Webster, who played on my album *The Dragons Are Still Out*. But with Persistence of Memory, it was like, "OK, let's put all the guitars down for a while," because my ears were burnt out and I wanted to get into the piano a little bit more. So I stopped playing with guitarists for a while. Now I do both. It got me more into the—not that I can play jazz, but just a different sound. I'm really proud of those records.

The Boom Boom Band, not that it was a formula that I'd come up with, but those songs and that instrumentation really started to click at that point.. But playing with horns was very freeing; it made me work harder too. With the Boom Boom Band, I didn't have to play two hands on the piano; I barely touched the piano sometimes. And I could go crazy, I could roll around on stage. Playing with Persistence, I have to play the piano because I'm the only guy playing chords. But because of that, I can go anywhere and they would just have to follow me. When you play with guitar guys, everybody needs the structure. I don't even use a bass when I play with Persistence. It's totally free in a way.

Persistence of Memory Orchestra features the great Jim Doherty on drums and Mark Chenevert & Ken Field on horns; these cats make me sound awesome. People are always amazed, like, you guys make a lot of noise for just three people—sometimes it'd just be three of us. They're just not used to not seeing guitars. To me it's still rock & roll because of the rhythms, because of the drummer. Jim can play Afro-Cuban beats, he can play sambas, he can play all kinds of shit. It makes me sound better because to me, I'm always just being me on top of whatever's swirling around me. Even if I've written a song, you pick musicians you don't have to tell what to do, and you just trust them. If you pick the right guys you don't have to say anything; you just play. But we can never do the same thing twice in a row.

MRR: How did an old rocker like yourself get into working with samples and loops?
Willie: It's because I like the hip hop stuff; that's what they were doing. They were using pieces of things and I liked that because you didn't need a band, you could do it yourself. You didn't need a drummer. I have a vast record collection. I remember making cassettes of little bits, like "I want to use this, I want to use that." I used to love that stuff. Some of the sounds when I was making soundtracks for Herny Ferrini's film *Lowell Blues*, we used a lot of stuff from my record collection.

MRR: What are you working on now?
Willie: I've got vague ideas for the next record but it's all dribs and drabs. I don't go into the studio with a bunch of songs anymore. Mostly I've gone in with some lyrics and maybe an idea here or there and put them together like puzzles because mainly it's me and the engineer, usually Tony Goddess. A lot of times it'll be like the hip hop guys; I'll go in, I'll play the drums, and we'll make a loop and I'll start putting stuff on top of that. That whole *Vincent Ferrini* album was like that, just piecing it together. Instead of learning a song and having guys practice it and go in and play it and you take the best version, it's like discovering stuff in there and making stuff up and coming home with some stuff. And you can actually walk into the studio and walk out with something in your hand, where in the old days you had to practically beg the guy to get a cassette of anything or a piece to take home and listen to.

MRR: Do you still play out these days? Can we catch Willie Alexander live?
Willie: In the last few years, I've been averaging maybe 20 or 30 gigs a year. Not as much as I used to. It's gotta be right, it's gotta be meaningful for me. And who I can get to do it with me. I have no real plans of stopping—but I go through this crap every time I play. Inadvertently I'm a miserable person until I get on stage and start playing. It's never eased up; it's gotten even worse. But once we start I'm fine. It's just the before. That's what motivated the drinking when I was younger. But you saw the error of that after a couple of decades. I've lived to tell the tale so I'm lucky. A lot of guys haven't.

I drank for the first twenty years of my career, my so-called career, or whatever you want to call it, and I've been sober since 1985. I think coincidentally that I've made a lot of my best music since, after the age of 50, which is ridiculous. Now you just can't think about stuff like age. I mean, they put me in the Hall of Fame here in Boston in 1987; that's like putting you out to pasture. I've made a dozen records since then. You just keep going because that's what you do.

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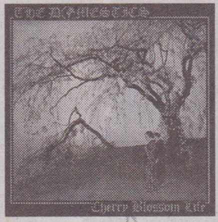

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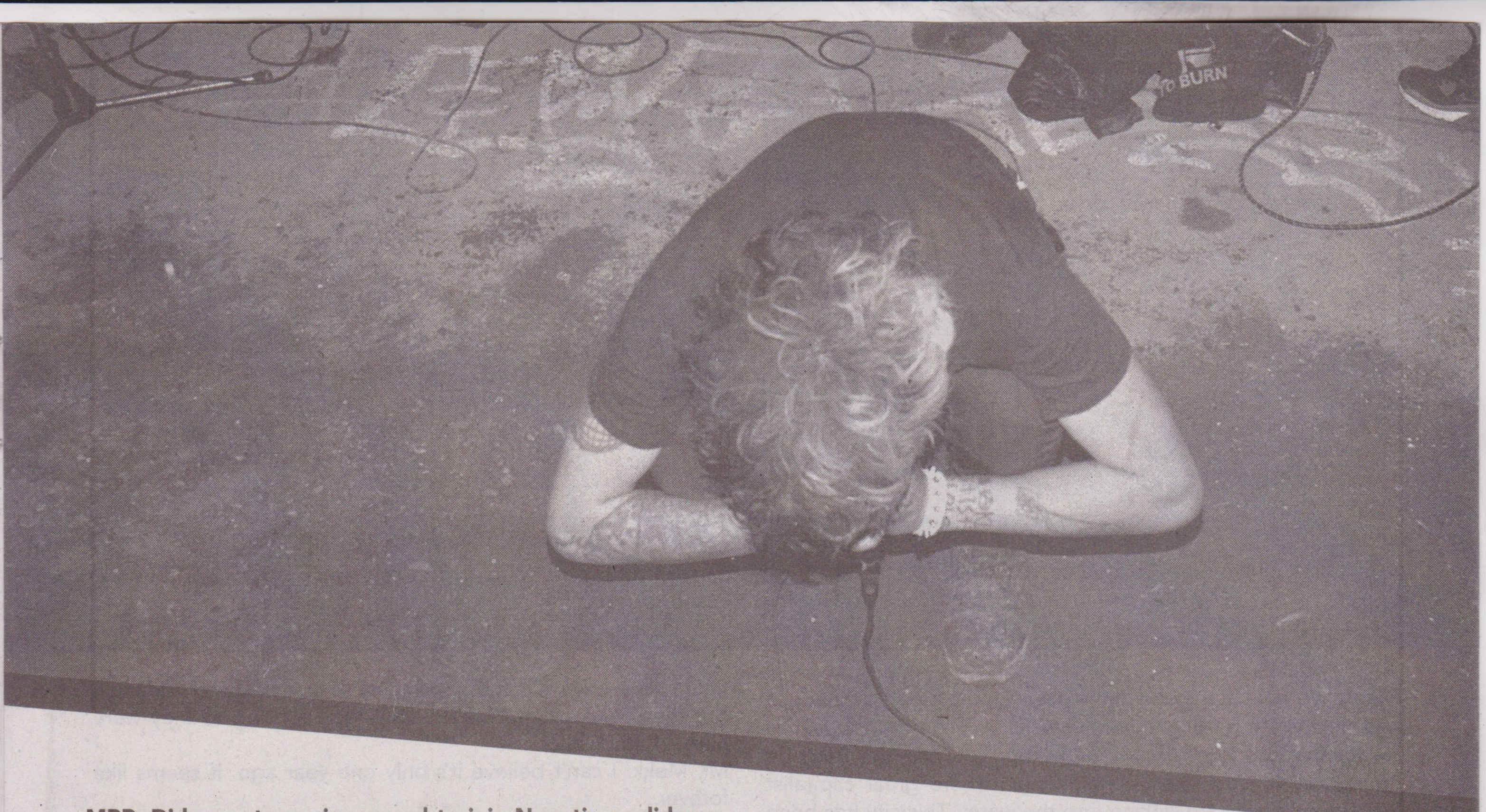
NEGATIV

This band is really something else. Guitar player Mr. Møkk, channeling Hendrix by way of Børre Løvik, is a punk institution in himself. Drummer Erik is loveable and kind, spreading warm and psychedelic vibes. Bassist Sig Vicious is a burst of energy and by far Oslo's best dresser. Singer Skunk is known for earning a couple of punk points throwing up on stage and a million points for getting a mop and cleaning it all up. Sustainable punk wipes the floor with any other kind of punk! They are more than the sum of those beautiful parts; is Negativ Oslo's most positive band?

Interview conducted by Kaluza on autonomous ground (H40, Oslo, not Norway). Photos provided by the band.



MRR: Did you stop using speed to join Negativ or did you join Negativ to stop using speed?

Skunk: The thing was, before our first band practice, in January 2016, I was anxious. I didn't know Erik. Sig and I played together in Jenkem Warriors, a band going through a really rough period at the time. As for Mr. Møkk, I was nervous, to be honest. I had just burnt down the house of one his close relatives. I didn't wanna bring any of my old shit into this band. For me Negativ was a fertile ground for positive development. So I quit my speed habit before our debut gig, with Skizophrenia from Japan, on May 1.

MRR: Did you share this with the rest of the band?

Sig Vicious: I was informed quite early.

Skunk: Yeah, Sig knew more about my situation than the others. With Jenkem Warriors I had this twisted idea that I wouldn't be able to perform without the assistance of chemical drugs. Sounds dramatic, I know, but like any other addict I was a master of self deception.

Meeg: Truth be told, the first time we played together, we smoked alot and got really stoned.

Mr. Møkk: And Skunk, believe me, I was never pissed off at you for burning down that house. That was the second time there was a fire there. No hard feelings. Shit happens. You were being a young punk, just doing your thing, and that's OK. I've been there myself.

MRR: When you started Negativ it was a negative period. What about the rest of you? You were all in a bad place?

Erik: In 2015, I had just moved out on my own after starting my studies at the university. I was a low point in life. I was ridden with social anxiety, I was really scared. I wanted so badly to get a chance to work at Mr. Møkk's studio Endless Tinnitus, and my friend coached me for six months on how to approach Mr. Møkk. I was afraid he'd kill me. But when I asked him, the answer was simply yes. 2016 was a new start, it was fun and stimulating. I was really excited to play with these people, I didn't know what to expect, and this band managed to get my focus away from the mundane everyday routine.

Sig: I had just started being tested for ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder), and I was scared and frustrated. What the hell was wrong with me? Every project I was involved in crashed into a wall. Starting Negativ was like a vitamin injection, and a release for my pent-up tension and frustration.

MRR: What about the ADHD diagnosis?

Sig: Now I know that I have it, more and more things in my life fall into place as I learn more about ADHD. I thought that the frustration I suffered was a symptom of anxiety and depression. I found it so hard to put boundaries on myself, and all my physical impulses, to fit into the norm of a functional human being. Trying to adjust was so demanding, it took all my concentration and drained me of energy. With Negativ, I felt as though there was finally something in my life that went rather smooth.

Skunk: We had been through a really turbulent year with Jenkem Warriors.

Sig: I was disillusioned with the entire punk scene. I wanted to just turn my back and leave. But I had no place to turn to; there was no other place I wanted to be. It was such a dark chapter.

Skunk: You almost left the band right before our European tour. Can I say that?

Sig: Yes, I really tried. I was desperate for a way out.

Erik. Before *we* were going on tour?

Sig: Yes.

Mr. Møkk: Whoa, we had no idea! The truth comes out.

Sig: No place like *Maximum Rocknroll* to wash our dirty laundry.

Mr. Møkk: For me that time was grey and dull. I was depressed. Then one day in the studio Erik and I jammed a bit, did a Negazione song, and he told me about this band project he was starting with Skunk, and Sig was gonna play guitar. I was practically bandless at this time. It was a heavy time, not only for the four of us individually, but for Oslo and the scene that we were a part of.

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Skunk: We were at the end of the plank on the flagship that once was Norwegian Hardcore. I didn't want to live in Oslo, I wanted to get the hell away. Bands broke up, you had the Barcode Project, all these fucked up buildings, where great capitalist institutions slowly are sinking into the water. This city has been "developed" with no understanding of what's going on. Taking over everything, throwing people out, with no concern for anything but business. All cultural activity is being stifled. H40, where we are sitting now, where I am living, is my platform to show that I am something else than just a fuck-up. This is where I can express myself creatively and realize my projects. I was certain we'd be thrown out. That was hard for me. Oslo was horrible.

Sig: Also this rape case split the scene. People I knew preached against sexism, but were unwilling to face the problems with sexism when they got close to them. For me, their reaction to this case made me say, "Fuck this shit, fuck these people, fuck this scene, I want no part." It doesn't look quite that bleak anymore.

Skunk: The elements are still around, though.

Sig: I thought this would be vehemently disapproved of in our social forums. Instead it was met with perpetual discussions, people talking behind each others' backs, and it took a long time before the assaulter was collectively rejected. For me that was unforgivable. I expected more. It's getting better now though. The people who didn't want to recognize that the assault has taken place have all left the scene, more or less. Good riddance. But they were around for too long, and as long as they were here, I hated Oslo.

Mr. Møkk: I can't believe it's only one year ago. It seems like forever.

Erik: I also have a strong musical standpoint with Negativ. There is just so fucking much punk music played with a D-beat. For me it was important to stand against that. That's why I play the Slayer beat or S-Beat.

Skunk: I hated the name "S-beat". I still do. But...

Erik: No D-beat. That's a very easy way of making our sound stand out.

Mr. Møkk: Negativ is about liberation. Just hammer it out. I think that we had all felt resigned. No hopes, nothing to lose, just fuck it. We had fought, we had tried, and it was just defeat after defeat after defeat after defeat. It came to a point where I stopped caring, just fucking do this.

Sig: We were at a place where all emotions are totally raw, just "Ugh!"

Mr. Møkk: We were also a weird constellation of people: new energy, no ambitions, no hopes.

I felt similar to the singer in Knuste Ruter. When he had a stroke, he felt, in his own words, that he "was more dead than alive." He's a person that really means a lot to me. He has sent me amazing lyrics that has been a lifebuoy for me. But at the time I was filled with sorrow and negativity. I lost hope. I couldn't see a light at the end of the tunnel. At the same time we knew

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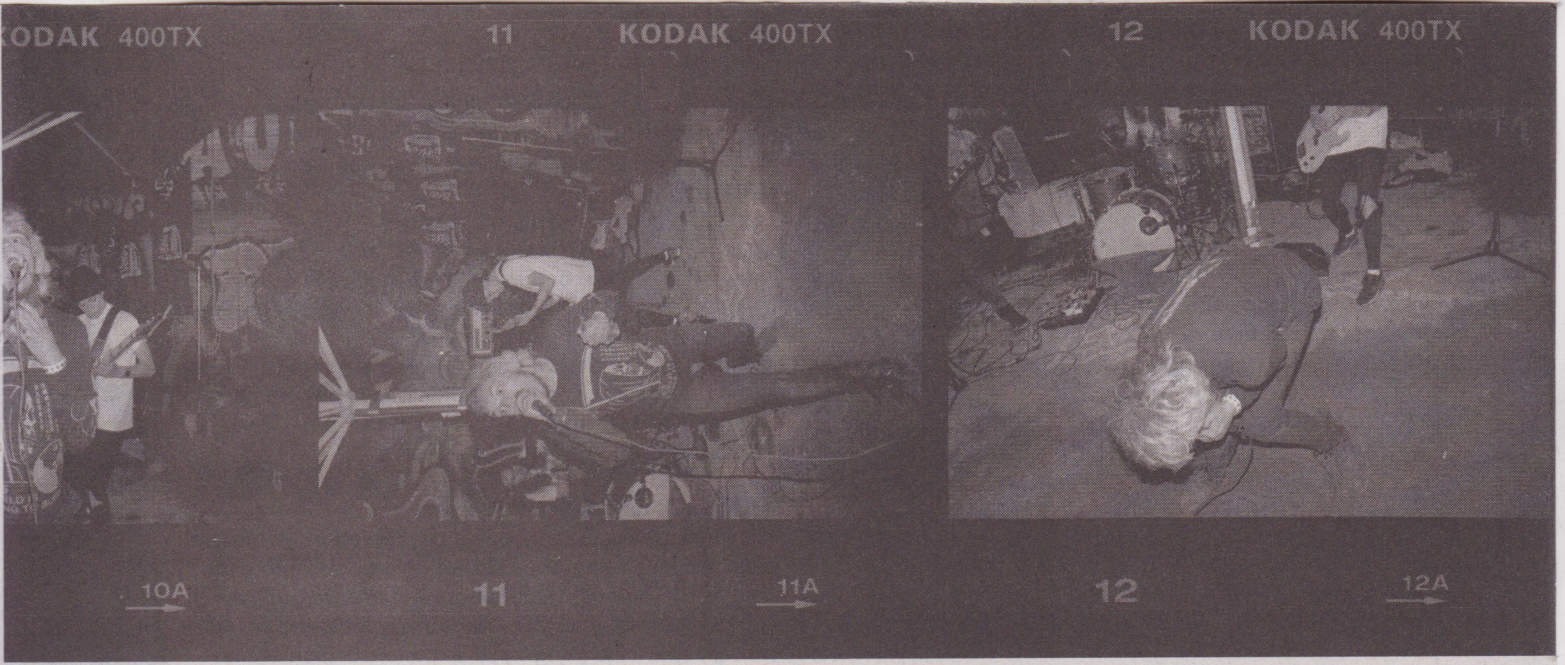


we'd be thrown out of Endless Tinnitus, after finally getting the perfect sound.

Erik: We had made some major improvements.

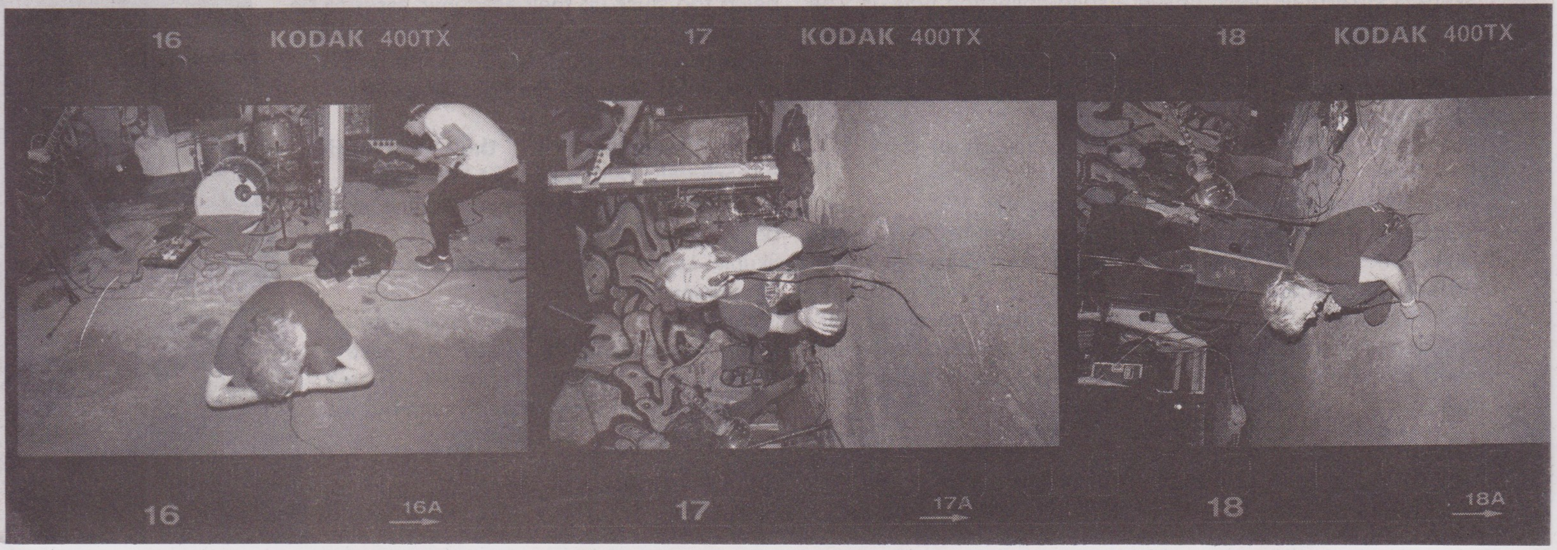
Møkk: After 15 years we found the perfect Endless sound. The last few records that were recorded there were really solid: Terrorstat, the Ødeleggers, Knuste Ruter, Negativ and Modern Love. Oh, and some rock'n'roll records, but we don't need to talk about them. [*laughter*]

It had been growing for some time. 2015 was a sick year, but records take some time to make. In 2015 we released the zine *Oslo City Rockers* with 36 local bands. Everybody thought, "Yeah, this is gonna be great!" but then it all collapsed and nothing happened. It was a dull and grey winter.

MRR: The stories of the autonomous place H40 and the studio Endless Tinnitus run parallel to each other in many ways.

Skunk: Two years ago we did a festival which put us back on the map. It clearly showed we had a living and vital scene. We were happy. Then all of a sudden we see this ad online: the entire street is up for sale on the open market! We hadn't received any notification from the local authorities. We got in touch, and we had several meetings with potential buyers, interested in "saving" us. They wanted to push this disgusting package on us, integrate us into their "green" "revolution." We refused to see their fucking version of urban ecology, with tomatoes grown on the roof, as the way to go. We are not interested in collaborating with capitalists. Then we heard that the buyers would be the same people that tore down the entire collective Brakkebygrenda because it disturbed the view from their fucking yuppie apartments. It sounded too absurd to believe, some "Evil Legacy Network of Darkness" type of shit. Alas, it turned out to be true. We organized direct actions, confrontations with the local authorities. People from the Green Party came here for coffee. They promised us that if we voted for them and convinced other autonomous to vote for them, they'd save us. They stabbed us in the back. The Green Party voted against the preservation of Hausmannskvartalet.

Going after the capitalist institutions is difficult. You can hurt them time after time, but they have so much money they don't need to care. We found out it was better to go after their lawyers. The day after a small demonstration where a handful of our people got into their lawyers' office and encouraged them to stop dealing with the buyers, we got a phone call. Suddenly we were invited to negotiate. They gave us pamphlets stating they recognized our autonomy, it was just off the hook crazy. They actually said what we wanted to hear. Of course it seemed sneaky and slimy. We realized we were closer to sabotaging their dream project of a Camden Town in the centre of Oslo than we had ever known. Right now we are in negotiations about paying a symbolic sum for this place. I can't really believe it, 'cause capitalists always stab you in the back any chance they have, but



hey, at least we are sitting here. Last summer we had an eviction order hanging over our heads. We thought we'd be thrown out in two weeks. Since this is in *MRR* and not a Norwegian newspaper I guess it's okay to say this: we also squatted the two empty buildings as a protest against that shit. It seemed impossible, but we might actually win this fight. On our own premises. I never thought I'd get to see this. This is one of the first victories we can celebrate in a long time.
Sig: In a fucking *loooooong* time!
Mr. Møkk: I remember having to rewrite a speech: "They refuse to go into dialogue with the people living in this building." Oh, erase that part! [*laughter*]

MRR: Endless Tinnitus also got a new start.
Erik: The housing project works fine. I live there!
Mr. Møkk: The ground Endless Tinnitus was on was owned by the same authorities as H40. They lied and played a bunch of deceitful games. It was annoying and frustrating as hell. Why on earth to they even lie to me? A little motherfucker with no power whatsoever! All I got from them was either lies or no answers, and then they sold us. We organized some small protests and scared a few potential buyers. The area was for sale for 104 million kroner (about 12.5 million USD). They sold it for 40 million. Later on I used this in negotiations with the new owners: "Hey, we've saved you 60 million. You owe us." Then upping the ante: "We made the local authorities lose 60 million kroner, let's see how much we can make you lose." I presented them a scary scenario: our entire punk rock network confronting them, from people in public broadcasting to angry 16-year-olds in the street. Did they want this? Our would they rather have a story about them giving us a house we could run ourselves, doing non-commercial rent. That was our goal. We didn't quite get there, but we got a good deal. They do make a little bit of money, but nothing compared to the market prices. Now it's a housing collective, later we will have a gig venue and a social space. We tried to have the studio there as well, since the studio was the heart of the old Endless Tinnitus. But it wasn't practical. Thankfully I met a guy who hooked us up with a new place. Dealing with these capitalists is such a shit game, where both parts try to bullshit each other to the max.
Skunk: In meetings with capitalists they always offer you free chocolate and free coffee. It's just to make you talk. While they just drink green tea.
Erik: So don't accept the coffee and chocolate they offer you?
Skunk: You can do it, of course. But you ought to know that it's there to make you talk. Like a truth serum.

MRR: You can grab it as you leave the meeting.
Skunk: I steal their pens. I have a solid collection now. In *The Art of War* by Sun Tzu it says "keep your friends close, and your enemies closer." All business people read that book. They want you to trust them. Of course we don't, but right now I think we have the upper hand.
Mr. Møkk: *The Art of War* helped me too! [*laughter*]

MRR: So what about the music of Negativ?
Skunk: I don't like psychedelic rock, but I am inspired by the Nuke York scene, bands like Dawn of Humans, Crazy Spirit, and Anasazi. In your face hardcore, but with psych / freak elements.
Erik: Psychedelic music was originally just about pushing limits, entering another condition, opening up a new space. It doesn't need to be about long organ parts and massive amounts of reverb.
Skunk: Our first song was "Subject", but I think we really first created our own sound with the jam session from which "N.E.G.A.T.I.V." evolved. That was also suggested as a band name.
Erik: We also discussed the Negatives.
Skunk: That jam defined our sound as a band. I didn't know what to sing, or maybe I had an idea in the back of my head, then Møkk said: Can't you just sing "Depressed. Depressed. Maybe I'm depressed?"
Møkk: I thought that was what he was singing!
Skunk: I was just screaming, I didn't have any words.
Sig: You heard what you wanted to hear, Møkk. It resonated extremely well with all of us.

MRR: Let's talk about N.A.T.
Mr. Møkk: I was diagnosed as depressed a few years back. And I learned about N.A.T. (Negative Automatic Thoughts). This ought to be taught in elementary schools. To learn how to recognize negative interpretations of stuff people say, things you experience. Sometimes missing a bus, can make someone's world crumble and make the person suicidal. It's a spiral of negative automatic thoughts, then everything sucks.

Cognitive psychology is important to me. To observe my own thoughts, recognize them, then change them. Self-enhancement. To be clear, firm and determined. I keep practicing. Maybe our third record will be called *Self-Enhancement*.
Sig: Or *PMA*.
Skunk: Like that book Bad Brains read, *Think and Grow Rich*, by Napoleon Hill. It's about communicating clearly and radiating positivity.
Mr. Møkk: Negativ's negativity is actually positivity. In 2017 everything is upside down, the opposite of what it actually is.
Sig: That's a good theory.
Mr. Møkk: Take the racists, for example. They whine about an "invasion" of refugees, as if they are the ones who are "threatened". By poor people trying to escape the atrocities of war? Rich racists are not victims, they are tyrants. Upside down. Also, see how mainstream culture is appropriating protest culture.
Sig: And kids rebelling against their parents by being well behaved, straight A students.
Mr. Møkk: Working class people voting conservative.
Skunk: The left wing hating the working class, being too stuck up their academic asses to be concerned about solidarity and unity, making people insecure—those used to be the methods of the aristocracy and the right wing elite!

MRR: Ministers in the Norwegian government railing against "the elite."
Sig: Powerful politicians complaining about being "bullied".
Skunk: Urban developers speaking about the preservation of ecology.
Mr. Møkk: Yeah, greedy investment companies buying this place to "make a social urban ecological project. There's been one here for seventeen years, but we

will tear that one down, to make a new, improved one". *Yeeeeaaah*. The world is upside down. So when we call ourselves Negativ, we are actually positive.

Sig: It's the upside down world.

Mr. Møkk: The other day I saw this post on Facebook that said "Love wins." It pissed me off. Come on, hate always wins. Or at least has the upper hand. The fight is never over. The struggles continue. And hate has the upper hand. We will learn from this and fight, armed with hatred.

Sig: You can't just throw flowers at an enemy with big guns.

MRR: Or give them a Pepsi. [*laughter*]

Skunk: Radicals used to want to change the future, now they just try to halt it, or at least soften its blows. And instead of throwing stones and occupying spaces outside banks, it's now all about strengthening yourself, your body as temple. Individualism has replaced the collective radical vision.

MRR: That is certainly the case when it comes to mental health. Everyone is stuck inside their own world, with medication and therapy, instead of dealing with mental problems as what they in many cases actually are: social problems.

Møkk: I've discussed this a few times: Are we punks just a sick, twisted people who think we have the answer to all the world's problems? Are we that guy with "The end is near" sign? A bunch of psychotic fuck-ups? No wonder the world won't listen. Then again to be ill in a sick society like this is actually a sign of health.

Skunk: If you're well-adjusted in this world, you must be a psychopath.

Møkk: This society spawns psychopaths.

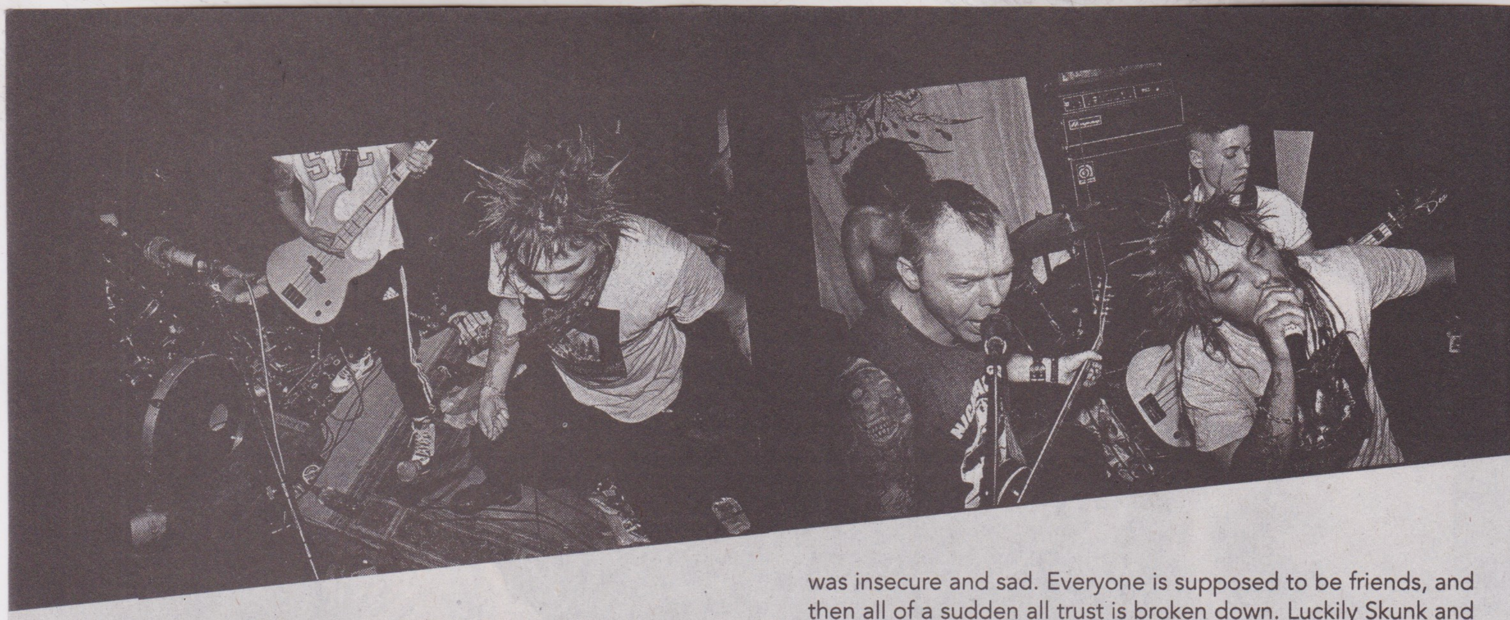
MRR: The word "anarKEY" is used twice in the lyrics on your 7". Is anarchy the key?

Skunk: My answer might be disappointing. I wanted to break down the traditional way of lyric writing, inspired by Japanese hardcore. Eel has a song called "Violent Anarky"—it sounds stupid and tough!

MRR: You also sing about "just fucking rats running through the night." What is the deal with rats? Skunk, I remember you also sending this letter to *Maximum Rocknroll* that said "Sorry about the rat shit".

Sig: Should we talk about the rat invasion at Blitz in 2011?

Skunk: Sure. I have always been a bit conflicted: should we define our enemies as parasites, or are we the parasites on this fucked up planet? The lyrics to that song "Thermavision" was written at a time when this place was under quite heavy



surveillance, and twice a day police helicopters flew right over us, at the exact same times every day. We are these rats, finding secret spots with snacks nobody else'd take notice of. We are parasites, but then again so are the rich motherfuckers. Maybe the whole planet is a huge ecosystem of rats, parasites eating each other, hunting and fleeing all the time.
Mr. Møkk: It's easy to identify with rats.
Sig: There was this guy we knew, he lived together with a dude that had a snake. The snake was fed with rat babies. He brought all the rat babies to Blitz, and in 2011 everyone at Blitz had a rat.
Skünk: My first rat was Lola, she was the one who shat on the letter I sent to *MRR*. That letter was sent in a time with lots of rats and lots of chaos. I have a cat now!

MRR: You sing "Shock the stupid masses, shock their eyes wide open." Do you see yourselves as an avant-garde leading the way for the people?
Skunk: There is also this wish to shock my own eyes open, I am as much a part of the stupid masses as anyone. I spent an entire year in front of the computer, doing booking, the label, the distro. It was all I did. Got up. Had coffee. Then spent maybe twelve to sixteen hours in front of a screen. It felt like sitting in an electric chair, slowly roasting. I waited for something to come and shake some life into me. I read about the atrocities of this world every day, remaining unaffected. I got scared that the bomb would never come. I wanted it to explode. I wanted everyone´s apathy, my own included, to finally end. I wanted the shock.
Mr. Møkk: Negativ is such a psychological band.
Sig: Every rehearsal is also a collective therapy session.
Mr. Møkk: We always discuss our own emotions.
Sig: It evolved naturally, we didn't plan for this.
Mr. Møkk: We are honest and open with each other. Playing in this band is therapy for us.
Sig: We're very close, there is never this elephant in the room that we try to hide.
Erik: Can you explain why you almost quit the band?
Sig: I wanted to just get the fuck away. It was overwhelming, this feeling that I couldn't stay. I liked playing this band, but there were no venues where I could feel comfortable and safe. We hadn't properly discussed this rape case that found place in the scene. A lot of ugly gossip went around. To be stuck in a tour bus not really knowing whether I could trust people would suck. I think that if you don't strike down on sexism, you're a sexist yourself. We needed to have that conversation. It was hard. I was insecure and sad. Everyone is supposed to be friends, and then all of a sudden all trust is broken down. Luckily Skunk and I got through this, and I was assured.
Mr. Møkk: I have also experienced that the whole scene, all my "friends" suddenly were gone, when I had a conflict with a person. Everything I bleed for, been willing to die for, it was gone overnight. All I got was either indifference or ugly looks. Fuck it.
Sig: I was keen on just being normal, but what am I gonna do, I don't even know what normal is!
Mr. Møkk: My story is different from yours, but the emotions are the same. Where is the unity, the warmth, the love, the caring for each other? Did it die in the '80s?
Skunk: Punk got colder. More individualistic. More controlled. No bite. It's a priority to help bring people together and to attach all the shit we hate.
Mr. Møkk. We have reached the bottom. Now we're gonna take punk back.

MRR: Are we done?
Skunk: Can't we just do a straight interview about future plans, musical influences...[*laughter*]

MRR: Booooring!
Skunk: OK. We have our own studio (Endless Tinnitus), and our own label (Byllepest). We will record ourselves, mix ourselves and release ourselves. At least the first pressing. If I didn't start Byllepest to release our record, why would I do it? We have a compilation in the works, four bands from all over the world, called *Infection 1* together with Muro from Colombia, Blank Spell from Philadelphia, and Gazm from Canada..
Møkk: Byllepest means bionic plague, and infection is a powerful expression. We were infected by society, now we will infect society with germs.
Skunk: The infection concept is inspired by Darby Crash of the Germs. He had Circle One, which included five people. I think it was a planned punk rock attack on the whole world. How much could rock'n'roll be destroyed in five years? Sadly he never made it to Circle Two before he killed himself. I'm gonna make *Infection 1* and quickly follow up with *Infection 2*. The infection will spread like a virus, of contaminated unity. We'll take punk back!
Møkk: Circle Two!

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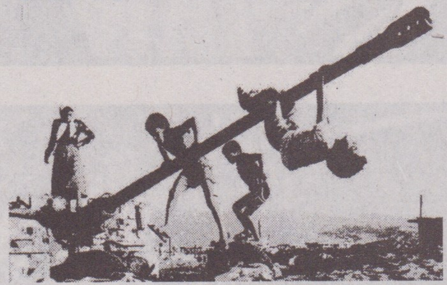

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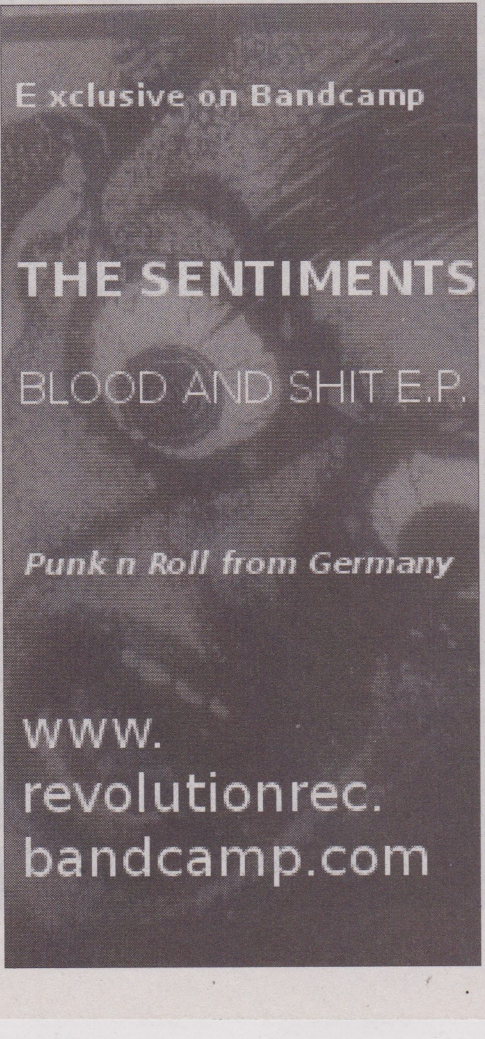

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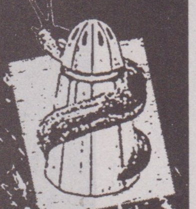

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ALABAMA PUNK

The second of a two part series covering the history of Alabama punk music by Ian Wise.

HUNTSVILLE

If being punk in the '80s in Birmingham was difficult, it paled in comparison to Huntsville. Birmingham had its own problems to deal with and while there was a backdrop of violence as a setting to the scene, there are very few stories from the early days involving punks being bashed by anyone other than neo-Nazis. However, an hour and a half North the scene was growing in a less friendly environment. The Knockabouts were spearheading punk in Huntsville. Formed in early 1982, they were one part Misfits and two parts Cramps, filtered through Hunter S. Thompson with a Southern drawl. The band recorded dozens of tracks of varying sound quality, but the sonic aggression is integral to each of them. Their singer, the enthusiastic and virile Vince Sharp, seemed to take the brunt of the force and his brushes with the law for obscenity and disorderly conduct are still the stuff of legend in Alabama. In a 1984 interview with *Maximum Rocknroll*, Sharp said this of their songs and their surroundings:

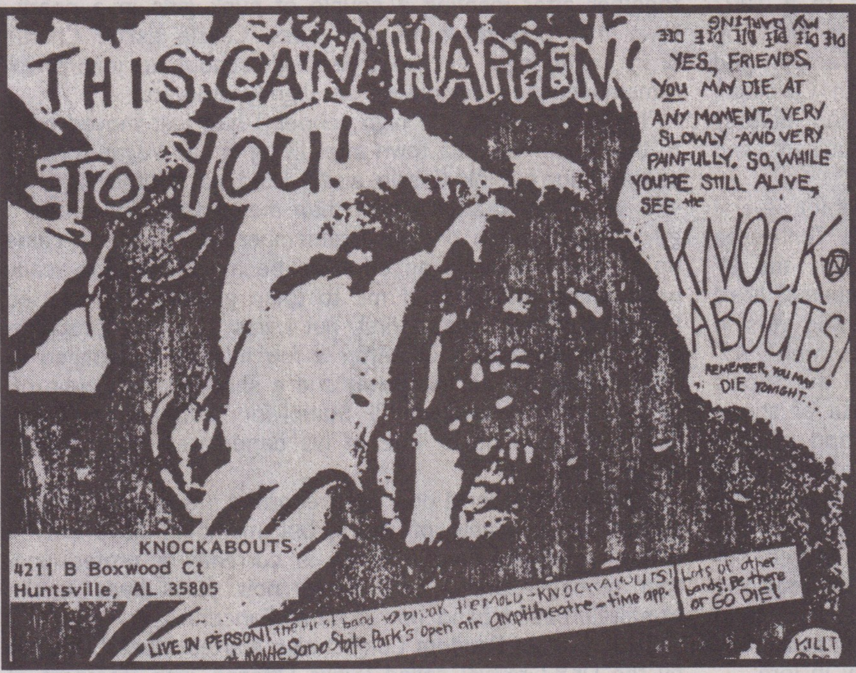
"I woke up this morning at 6:36. I got ready and went to work for ten hours. I support myself, my wife, my son. It stormed today, and when it stopped the cesspool was unchanged. It's still Alabama and it still sucks...Punk bands sing about the Klan, segregation; it's here a normal facet of Southern society. People here are raised to accept it, to conform to the norm; to break the norm is forbidden. You immediately become the enemy."

Knockabouts shows are fondly remembered as something legitimately dangerous. At an early show, the band stopped playing as they noticed the crowd seemed thin. They walked up to the door of the venue set up in old car lot and looked out the window to see that they were surrounded by police officers stopping anyone trying to get in; the band simply went back to their instruments and finished their set. Other times, police would follow them while they put up flyers for upcoming gigs, tearing down the advertisements, calling them "faggots" and threatening violence. On more than one occasion, police issued death threats while searching through members' cars. Sharp describes the setting as "the early '80s. No one had seen a punk rocker except on television...their instinct was to hate and destroy." The Knockabouts song "Where's My Vietnam?" was featured on the compilation *Barricaded Suspects* on California's Toxic Shock Records, which was the only vinyl appearance during their run. Prank Records released a 7" of selected demos in 1995.

The scene the Knockabouts produced gave way to a younger band, Dead Pigeon. Their influences were mainly skateboarding and the early '80s LA scene; and their 1984 demo *Force Fed Life* (recorded at Sound Cell Studios while most members were in their mid-teens) shows a band that is literally stuck somewhere in the middle of the serious thrashing of early Dischord on the East Coast and the smarmy chaos and whacked-out charm of Southern California. In reflection upon their time, their singer Wyatt Akins muses that they wrote "about things [they] didn't fully understand." But the purpose of punk is not to have fully realized opinions and solutions, the purpose of punk is to contain a visceral response to injustice and that's where Dead Pigeon hit the nail on the head. To have heroes you can barely look up to and let a smile slip on a half-pipe, seconds away from concussion. Dead Pigeon never released anything other than their demo, but members stay relevant in the Alabama scene to this day. Members later spent time in the Knockabouts, and when the Knockabouts and Dead Pigeon both split, members of each formed Monster Dog.

In the late 1980s, a group of bands emerged out of Huntsville that centered around Peer Pressure Productions. Bands like Coup D'Etat, Dyslexia, and Square Sheep were short lived bands that recorded a dozen or so songs each and played a few shows before disbanding and starting work on other bands. Order of Flagellants was a straightedge band that ranged in age from fourteen to sixteen that formed while the scene was in an upswing. They played publicly for the first time at an open mic night at a bar called the Tip Top Café, and recorded two demo tapes in 1988 and 1989. David Baird, the group's front man, ran the Peer Pressure Productions label and released tapes and 7"s from local bands and putting on shows in the Huntsville area, including Fugazi in 1991. When asked about the band's name, he cites a group from the middle ages that practiced self-harm as a way to prove religious devotion. "We never considered that most people would confuse 'flagellants' with 'flatulence', we just thought the name sounded cool." Under the swell of people involved in Peer Pressure, North Alabama became a hotspot for punk and metal acts in the 1989 and 1990, with several show spaces, including the Tip Top Café, a local arcade called the Village Haven in the suburb Toney, the Amory, and a ballroom in the Carriage Inn.

Shows in Huntsville were well attended for a mid-size city in the South, and crowds of between 300–400 people came out to see touring acts like Insted, Uniform Choice,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KILLT

Bl'ast, and Anal Cunt play with regional punk bands and local acts. Violence was still a fact of life, and fights involving dozens of people weren't uncommon when gangs of jocks or neo-Nazis showed up at shows or hang-outs at Big Spring Park in downtown Huntsville. The Village Haven arcade stopped booking punk bands after locals vandalized the building with racist graffiti and later fired shots at the building while a punk show was going on. The venue had no phone to call for help, so the crowd had to wait inside until the shooting stopped.

David Baird of Order of Flagellants and Peer Pressure currently lives in North Carolina, fronts the band Drunk in a Dumpster, and releases records on his newer label, No Profit Records. In 2009 he released a one-off 7" with members of Random Conflict under the name SxCxCx, which included 8 tracks written and recorded within 24 hours. Random Conflict is the most prolific band associated with the early North Alabama / Peer Pressure scene, whose earliest recorded output was two self-released cassettes in 1988 and 1989 with a 7" titled *Shadows of Existence* following in 1991. They have released several other split records and 6 full-length records (the most recent of which is from 2015) and have toured the United States several times. For punk kids growing up in Alabama from the early '90s to today, seeing Random Conflict is still a tradition and a sort of right-of-passage. Their musical styles have shifted drastically over the years, from a very crusty, very metallic sound in the late '80s, to street-punk anthems in the late '90s, to more straightforward USHC. Their current sound is an inspired blend of different eras of international punk, and the band has not ever softened with age.

As the scene in Huntsville evolved, the heavier sounds of the Peer Pressure bands were refined, but bands still had the same swagger and sloppy style. One of the early bands to pop up in the third generation of Huntsville bands was the Slackers, a band of outsiders that met while two members were working at Bandito Burrito with shared common interests in go-go shows and cheap beer. The band played their first show with Los Angeles's FYP in a field in Decatur, Alabama, powered by a generator. Drummer Matt Seward played a hi-hat, snare, and cymbal. "No bass drum...When Joey and Heiko came up with the idea to start a band, I was just hanging out. 20 years old, never played anything. So, naturally, I bought a drum set from one of my brother's friend's mom. She had bought a set to learn herself but lost interest. I bought them on installment from her. I got little receipts and everything." The band had a sort-of Frankenstein take on what kind of music they wanted to make, with Joey Tacone taking influence from classic American punk, Heiko Schrepel leaning towards more modern, melodic punk, and Seward influenced by bands on the Gravity and Kill Rock Stars labels. They recorded two 7"s, a split 7", and completed one tour through the South and up into the Midwest, driving around a green '60's Impala they installed a hitch on to haul a trailer and gear. They played Dayton, OH in the Larry Brrrds's house (famously starting a water balloon fight inside the house), and traveled West with a garbage bag of food the Larry Brrrds were nice enough to pack for them. It got them through three days in Chicago, where they stayed after several of their shows fell through, and played Chicago once (with Total Chaos), in the hallway of a theatre.

The Slackers broke up on stage at Gilman Street in Berkeley in what they later admitted to be a "calculated" break-up. Schrepel sold his car and stayed in California, joining Screw 32 as a roadie and later the Oi! band United Blood. He eventually joined Duane Peters' band US Bombs and the BYO Records band One Man Army before dying of cirrhosis in April of 2015. Tacone went on to form Joey Tampon and the Toxic Shocks with Greg Harvester, who later moved to California and formed the band Neon Piss.

The Slackers' "brother band" the Jawas (Matt Seward of the Slackers literal brother, Andrew, was a member) was a late '90s high school outfit that put out two records—one on the small but quality label Nation of Kids—and completed two tours as far west as California. Their sound was juvenile in a good way, blending heavier influences with a basic punk sound, and seemed to evolve separately from their Southern peers. They cited influences as wide as Fugazi and Creedence Clearwater Revival, though their influences are not always the easiest to pick out in their sound. They lived a short stint as the most popular punk band in North Alabama, and members went on to be in several bands that made bigger splashes, including the Pine Hill Haints and Against Me!

Around the turn of the century, a more refined band, Suckerpunch, started playing together. They cite no real influences, instead referring to themselves as "three friends." Ben Rhyne (drums, lead vocals) points to an affinity for bands like Filth and the Freeze, and describes the band as three skaters wanting to do something "straightforward." As was normal in the days before the internet, their influences were really probably more local bands and their friends than national acts, as those were the people they knew and the bands they saw. The Slackers, Random Conflict, Shitboys from Outerspace, and other locals were the names that were brought up as influences more than more well-known national bands, and Rhyne also points to a 1997 compilation CD called *Fuck East Bay, This is NOK* on Huntsville's Nation of Kids label featuring Joey Tampon and the Toxic Shocks, Pink Collar Jobs (from North Carolina), the Peeps (Huntsville), Property (Huntsville), and Shitboy from Outerspace (Huntsville), the Jawas, the Slackers, and Random Conflict.

In the early 2000s, Huntsville became a catch-all for several small cities scattered in Alabama South of the Tennessee border. A central location for the scene became the 9th Ave. House, home of members of the band Alabama Jihad Music. The band began in 2003 as a hard-driving version of synth punk and wore Nazi-esque uniforms with "AJ" patches. The Diseased, a street punk band from the Shoals area that recorded two demos, played a handful of shows before members moved in different directions and spurred the glammy sounds of the Static and the hardcore band Fight This Generation. Noxious, a four-piece who all hailed from different towns throughout Marshall County, shared a close friendship with the Disease and the two toured out to Oklahoma before both bands broke up after returning home. There was also a psychobilly, Cramps-inspired band called the Grimnotes that played literally one song at a show before imploding but are still remembered fondly in lore.

The scene was a small but urgent conglomerate of rural punks, some of whom were living in very dire circumstances and whose personal stories could take up pages upon pages. The most urgent and important band to emerge from the scene was the Mini Skirt Jerks, and while they were certainly not the first all-female outfit from Alabama, they were certainly the most aggressive. The band was based in Guntersville and was together for a couple of years, playing shows with bigger bands from the PunkCore Records, driving to Birmingham for shows, and recording a demo in 2004. Founding member Cassie Baher put the band together after meeting a couple of punk girls in a nearby town that played drums and bass. Cassie asked Charlie Smith, a younger girl from her high school, to join. Smith remembers their beginnings as slightly awkward:

"I was a freshman in high school. I had just moved back to this small Alabama town after living in Las Vegas for four years...I don't think Cassie and I liked each other initially, she was a few grades higher than me and sort of dating a guy I had a crush on, but I remember one day...she came up to me and made an effort to be my friend. She really encouraged and pushed me to [play guitar]...They started the band without me at first, but I was at all the practices and even the first show. After a few months I managed to buy a shitty an electric guitar and a shitty practice amp off of Brandon [The Diseased / Static] for $100. Looking back, I'm pretty sure he or one of his bandmates stole it from some other kid.

The Mini Skirt Jerks only ever recorded a demo and played shows for a couple of years, but members have stayed active in music. Charlie Smith is currently a professional tour manager and Cassie Baher now plays bass in the Huntsville-based band horror band Cancerslug.

Bill Reeves of Random Conflict also started a band inspired by the UK82 revival called Public Offense, with members of Noxious. The band was a fixture of all Huntsville shows despite the fact that members were split between Nashville and Huntsville and even the members couldn't agree as which city they called home. The band released a couple very good tapes and played bigger shows around the Southeast before Clay Sweatt (drums) and Todd Walk (bass) were asked to leave the band for unknown reasons. Todd was shot and paralyzed in a robbery and Clay died under mysterious circumstances that were ruled a suicide, but is still believed by many to have been murdered by his girlfriend.

TUSCALOOSA

Cottondale lies on the outskirts of Tuscaloosa, where the University of Alabama hosts the most dedicated college football support-base in the United States. The campus is clean and tidy, with a main strip for students to drink and several fraternity and sorority houses around the campus that have earned the university the title of one of the "best party schools" in the country. But outside of the university, Tuscaloosa County is populated by mostly impoverished rural communities. Cottondale, where Accelerators were from, is no exception. In the 1880s, the city was host to the Knights of Labor who helped organize workers in cotton mills, though the attempts were mostly unsuccessful as evidenced in a report by Mary Harris Jones in the early 1900s where she referenced children as young as six working in the cotton fields and "the machines, built in the North, were built low for the hands of little children."

The mainstream of Tuscaloosa County remembers one event from 1983; the death of the UA football coach Paul "Bear" Bryant, the winningest coach in college football history, but I'm willing to bet that the Accelerators would have a different story to tell about their surroundings that year. Their known output is a mere three tracks buried on the *Birth Defect* compilation cassette from 1983 (alongside more prolific bands like NOTA, Corrosion of Conformity, and Youth Korps) which got them mentioned in a March 1984 issue of *Maximum Rocknroll*, though any impact they had locally was lost as the participants moved on from punk.

Tuscaloosa is a strange case as there isn't much information on punk bands there from the mid '80s until the early '90s. Garage rockers Model Citizen got their start in Tuscaloosa, and the Phoebes were a Ramones-core punk band that wound up a regional comp in the mid '90s; members went on to form the Dexateens. The Penetrators were a surf rock band that was popular in the college circuit in the late '90s. Pain was a popular ska punk band from the city that achieved relative notoriety regionally during the ska revival of the late '90s.

There must have been other bands, but as the city has built-in turnover from the cycle of college students, all the participants are too far removed to track down. Bands were hosted at the Chucker, which closed down after they were given lofty fines for allowing underage patrons in tosee bands. Egan's, on the main strip of the university, was and still is a bar that will allow any kind of band to play and so it's not surprising to catch a punk band there, though the crowd isn't always happy about it (a Korova show in 2007 at Egan's ended after some frat boys that weren't clued-in literally started a fight with us during the middle of our set).

Tuscaloosa was also the home of Vinyl Solution, a store that stocked punk and proto-punk, whose owner George Hadjdakis was referenced by people interviewed as integral to keeping a younger generation interested in alternative and underground music.

Tuscaloosa's biggest export was Green Beret, whose guitarist Jon Ezell describes the band's beginnings as "two fifteen year-olds' attempt to musically represent the scene from *Predator* where they clear out a jungle with machine guns." The band became a cohesive unit that was later described as "Devo-violence" and "Run-All-Over-Your-Goddamn-Pets-Core," and played about 75 shows in central Alabama during their six year run as a band. They were a bad fit with most scenes in the state, with rare excursions to Birmingham, Jasper, and Montevallo that were described as "mutually confrontational." While they never played a show outside the state of Alabama, their recordings (consisting of two split 7"s, a full-length CD, and a slew of appearances on compilations) were made available all over the United States, Europe, and Australia through tape trades and releases on foreign labels. Their last show was a tag-team set with Texas's Pretty Little Flower in 2002. Ezell was working with founding member Matt Schwartz on a second album until Schwartz's suicide in 2004. Australian label Prolapse Records released a retrospective disc titled *Out of Control*.

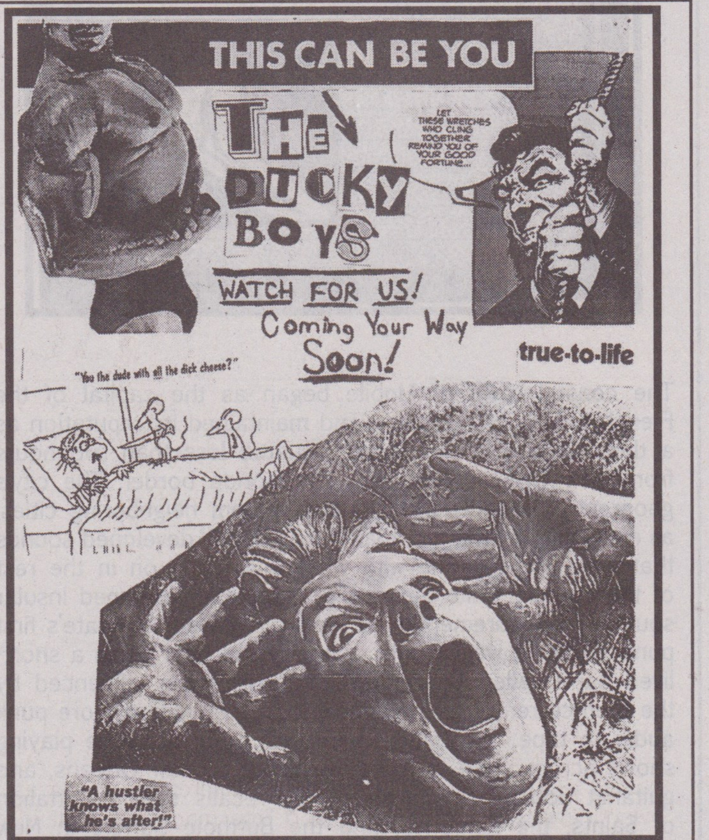
Ezell went on to form the surf / thrash band the Necromikids and the Hell, a snotty Tuscaloosa outfit that began after the start of the second Bush War. The initial aesthetic influence was pinpointed as "the first fifteen seconds" of 'Destruye' by Spain's Familia Real." The sound developed into a very informed, very sarcastic call back to the *Killed By Death* era of punk marked by one-off projects by weirdos exploring the genre. The band released a demo, a 7", and a CD during their run from 2003–2007, and recorded a second EP that remains unreleased. A producer at MTV approached the band in 2005 seeking permission to use their music as part of the reality series *Two a Days*, but the band turned down the offer in a hilarious e-mail exchange (that was once publicly available, but lost somewhere along the way), forever cementing their obscurity.

MONTGOMERY

Montgomery sits in the middle of the state, named for an Irish-born soldier of the American Revolution that never went anywhere near Alabama. It was the site of the original 1861 capital of the Confederacy. Unfortunately, the political structure and lack of identity still carries weight. In March of 1955, revolution was sparked when a fifteen-year-old Black girl named Claudette Colvin refused to give up her seat to a white woman, declaring her constitutional right to sit in any available seat. She was eventually arrested for disturbing the peace, violation of segregation laws, and assault. Several months later, the NAACP recreated her situation but in her place they put Rosa Parks, a secretary for the organization. Ms. Colvin was unmarried and pregnant, so the NAACP decided not to risk the public relations backlash and went with a safer candidate. While Ms. Colvin eventually testified in court and helped bring down segregation laws, Montgomery is still a bleak city for a large population of Black citizens.

A city like Montgomery, with perhaps more political strife than Birmingham, where nearby rural populations living without running water isn't uncommon even today, seems like the perfect place for a hotbed of punk. The earliest known band in the city was the Ducky Boys and while their sound is less aggressive than that of their neighbors in Northern cities, they sang about basic things for people with their surroundings: work. They had more melody than the skaters in Huntsville or dangerous Birminghamians, incorporating Hank Williams vocal melodies into a more rock-inspired back beat. Yes, it meant something, but it was easier to follow and you could maybe even dance to it.

The Ducky Boys were a young band made of mostly high schoolers and were inspired by metal. Travis Johnson, the band's drummer, remembers his turn to punk: "I was a fan ... of *New Wave Theater* on USA network cable in Montgomery when I was in junior high school. But I didn't really start buying punk rock albums until I joined the Ducky Boys. Our bassist used to go to Birmingham and buy all these great albums. He turned me onto Black Flag and all the great SST Records bands. The first time I heard 'Nervous Breakdown' I stopped listening to metal for a long time. I was sixteen."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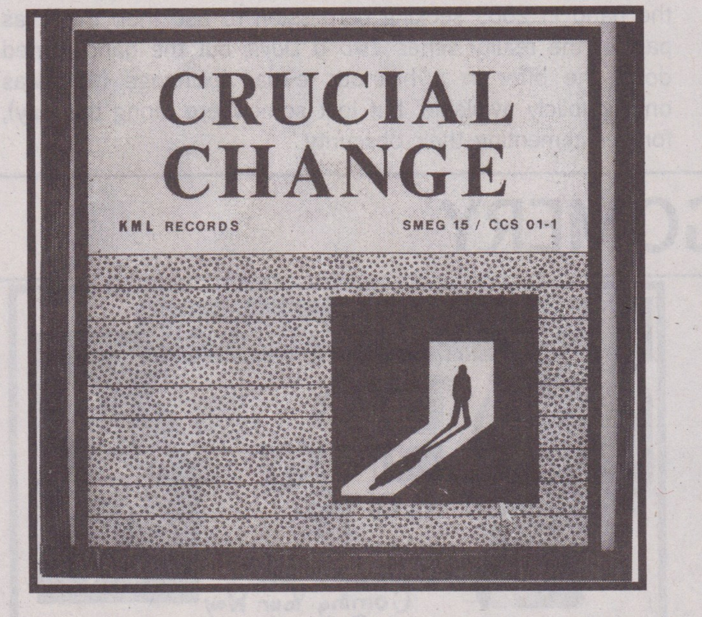
"A hustler knows what he's after!"

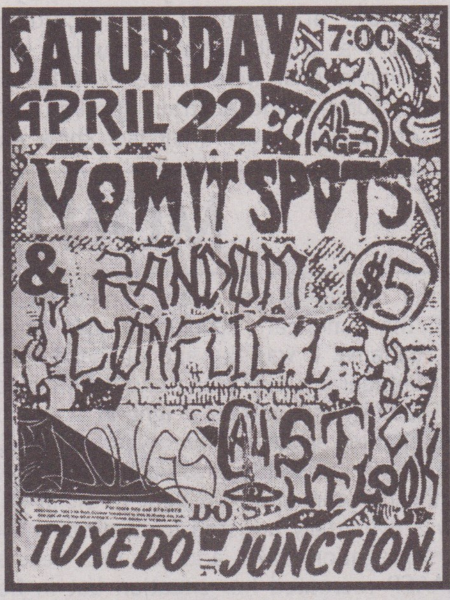
The band were largely ignored by the club circuit in Montgomery and were only able to play small shows in local gay bars, a community that was far more welcoming than the mainstream crowd in the city. The band also made trips to Birmingham and had a reputation there after playing with GNP and other locals. They recorded a demo in 1983 but fizzled out over time. Travis Johnson moved to California after high school and eventually played with both the Dickies and Final Conflict.

The small music scene in Montgomery tends to be commercial, as the majority of active bands in the city have been Top 40 or classic rock cover bands. Any smaller or flash-in-the-pan punk bands from the city went unrecorded and undocumented until the early 2000s when a small scene cropped up around the ska-punk band Bulletproof Marshmellows. They experienced a small amount of regional success through friendships with bands in other cities, but they weren't at all in tune with the small but dedicated scene of punks and skinheads that would trek to Birmingham or Huntsville for shows. The only band from the city that released any recordings was Japanese Women, a confrontational and noisy hardcore band that formed in 2010 and released a half a dozen documents during their tenure. Weston Flippo, the band's frontman, describes Montgomery as a town "not made for people from here" and that the constant flow of citizens from the city's Air Force base makes scenes difficult to maintain.

MOBILE / PENSACOLA



The coastal town of Mobile began as the capital of the French colony of Louisiana and maintained its reputation as a thoroughfare in the South, situated less than two hours from New Orleans and near the Florida border. The city's geography probably brought bands from neighboring cities, as evidenced by the fact that Mobile bands developed sounds that were more in-line with what was going on in the rest of the country while the rest of the state developed insular sounds. The aforementioned Ravers released the state's first punk 7", but it wasn't until several years later when a short-lived band called Dispersion, obviously more influenced by the then-current crossover movement, committed more punk audio to tape. The band were much more at home playing shows across state lines in Pensacola or New Orleans, and guitarist Johnny Goldfinger fondly recalls seeing Battalion of Saints, the Ramones, and the Butthole Surfers in New Orleans and making "mandatory visits to Toxic Shock in the French Quarter to buy records, magazines, and t-shirts." While New Orleans was over an hour away, Pensacola sits just across the Florida state line and was home to a venue called the Handlebar and a band called Maggot Sandwich (formally Kaos) that were integral to developing a scene in Southern Alabama and Northern Florida. That scene hit its "watershed" moment when Agnostic Front played Pensacola.



Dispersion had formed in 1984 and played their first show in Mobile after a skate contest with Barkhard and went on to play with Mad Parade in New Orleans, GBH in Pensacola, and broke up right before a gig with the Descendants in New Orleans. Their recorded output was scarce, though three tracks ended up on a compilation cassette called *Save the Dead* on Pensacola's KML label in 1986. They also made an appearance on an earlier cassette compilation titled *Death Before Dishonor*, though there are no known copies.

In the late '80s, Mobile produced one of the few bands that developed a reputation outside of the South, simply because they were one of only two bands from the state to put out a 7" during their '80s stint. The Vomit Spots' sole 7", 1987's *Nina Hagen Daaz*, is a sarcastic view on punk lifestyles from four smart-ass kids. The title track is a slower, alternative rock inspired song, while the rest of the record has more of a raging punk edge. The band continued on for several years after the release of the record and recorded at least two more times, for a cassette in 1989 and another session in 1988 that remained unreleased until 2010 when it was issued as a 12" on Last Hurrah Records under the title *Dude, I Didn't Know*. They appeared on a television show called *Blab Music* in 1988 and still occasionally play "reunion" shows in Mobile.

The only other band to release a real record in the '80s was Crucial Change, a band whose 1989 7" is one of my personal favorites from the state. If the record had come from the East Coast at the same time, the band would have been on bills with Warzone and Youth Of Today and thusly would have been written about hundreds of times and command *Killed By Death* prices. As a scorcher from the Southern end of Alabama, it has simply been lost in the sea of punk records from outside the hot cities of the movement. The band formed in 1988 from members of Dispersion. The band played all over the Southeast, going as far North as Charlotte and playing with Uniform Choice, Insted, and Rhythm Pigs. They broke up on stage at a local show, and the band literally threw the singer Rusty Pugh off the stage. They have since reconciled their differences.

Mobile continued to grow and at times has boasted a sizeable punk scene, though it has always been overshadowed by Pensacola and New Orleans. Agnostic Front returned to the city in the early 2000s, through a "watershed moment" it was not, as the rumor is that the promoter skipped out before paying the band and they've since not been back. The Hormones and German Honor Society were playing halls in the city to enthusiastic crowds but were short-lived bands.

THE REST

It feels odd and dismissive to shove the rest of Alabama into one large swath of rural sprawl, but there were several bands and scenes that existed outside of the cities and to overlook them would be a disservice. Anniston, a city located about an hour west of Birmingham, was home to Room 1213. While mostly catering to regional pop punk, there were hardcore shows at the venue and the club became an important stop in the Southeast for lots of bands.

Cullman, a short drive from Birmingham, was home to Jackpot Justice and Babylonious Monologue. Both bands played Birmingham and Huntsville in the late '90s through the '00s, but they also worked at building a younger scene locally. Jason and Jess Green, the married couple behind Babylonious Monologue, own Green Skateboards and booked shows in the city at several venues. My favorite memories of Cullman are playing in a classroom when I was sixteen. The band that opened for us was several years younger than we were and sounded like the Adolescents. The next time we played Cullman we played in the middle of a field on a replica of the classic Lynyrd Skynyrd stage set-up. The farm had been willed to a son that didn't want to work the land, so he pulled up the crops and built a stage. The field also housed a regulation-size wrestling ring and they would pair punk bands with wrestling events. Nearby Hartselle was home to Talking With Ed.

Auburn had an original live music scene that flourished with bands like Bone Dali, Smithwick Machine and Man...Or Astroman?, who released albums on Estrus and Touch & Go Records. Despite a vibrant DIY culture and the continued influence of punk regularly being played on the radio, there were very few bands that ventured into harder edged punk.

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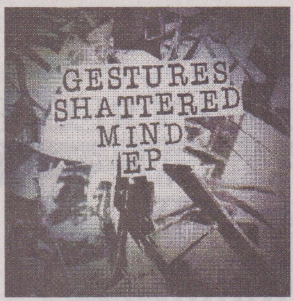
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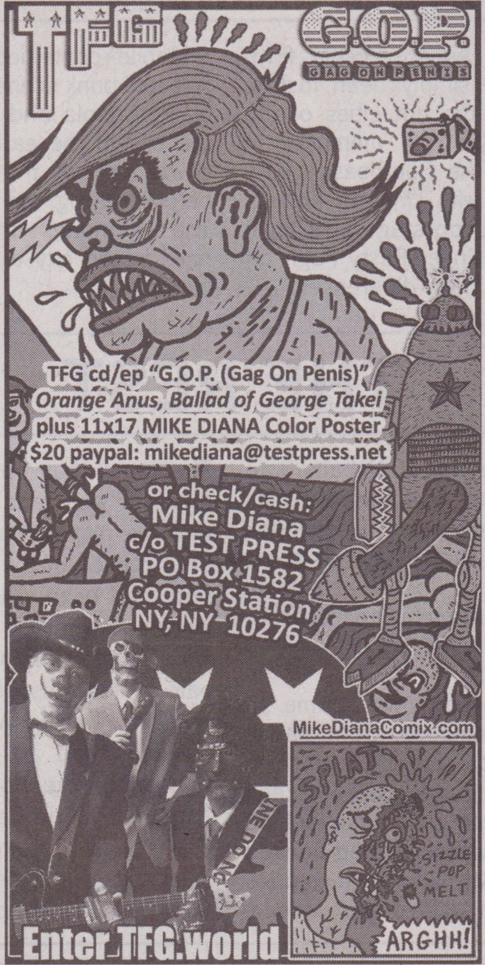
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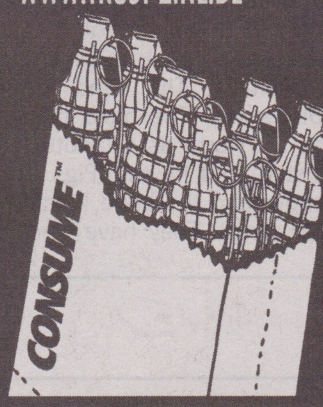

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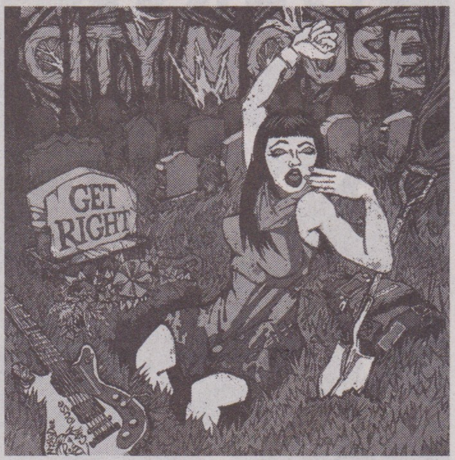
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CLARKSDALE MOAN

June 21, 1964 was a peculiar day. Three cars with three men in each had left different parts of the United States for Mississippi. On June 21 all found their destinies. Unfortunately for one group that was murder. The other two groups found retired blues musicians Skip James and Son House. That all three of these things happened on the same day is beyond strange. **Two Trains Runnin'** is the documentary centered on June 21, 1964, focusing on the events that led up to that fateful day, as well as what happened as a result of it.

The first car came from Cambridge, Massachusetts in search of blues musician Son House. It carried Nick Perls, Dick Waterman and Phil Spiro. House recorded in the 1930s and little was known about his music in the 1960s, never mind his whereabouts or even whether he was still alive. This small group of blues record collectors had discovered House through old 78s. Inspired by an off-handed remark by musician Bukka White that his friend singer Lillian Glover aka Ma Rainer had seen House in Memphis, the group set out for Tennessee.

The second car carried John Fahey, Bill Barth, and Henry Vestine from Berkeley, California in search of Skip James. This group was working off a mention on one of James's records of town in Mississippi. They hoped the town would be where James still resided. They traveled through Mississippi for a couple of weeks before a tip from a gas station attendant brought them to James' hospital bed.

The third car contained Freedom Summer activists James Chaney, Michael Schwerner, and Andrew Goodman. This group was heading to Mississippi to help register people to vote. They were part of a larger group of volunteers that were heading to Mississippi the following day. Chaney, Schwerner, and Goodman left before the rest to help with a church in Longdale, MS that had been burnt down.

The activists' car had only been there for a day before they were arrested for speeding and thrown in jail. When the men had not returned at the scheduled time, a member of the Council Of Federated Organizations began searching for them. He called the jail, but was told they were not there. They were released when it got dark and sent out on the road heading for waiting members of the Klu Klux Klan, of which the county sheriff was also a member.

Stories of the KKK's heinous activities are always hard to hear. It is extra troubling to watch this with the current revitalization of the KKK and other racist hate groups in the United States and around the world. In this part particularly **Two Trains Runnin'** maintains an even tone of sadness and outrage. The murder of these three men would wake up politicians and people outside of the South to what was actually happening there. Yet, it is not forgotten that this was the result of two white men and one black man being murdered. Everyone acknowledges that the murder would have no political consequence if all three men were black.

Two Trains Runnin' does an excellent job weaving the stories of the three groups into a cohesive narrative. Although their paths did not cross that June and they did not know what the others were up to, their stories have become part of each other's history as well as that of the United States. (twotrainsrunnin.com)

Prior to **Two Trains Runnin'** I had enjoyed a look at early American music on PBS called **American Epic**, which is now on DVD. **American Epic** is the story of the American music industry. They refer to it as the "first time America heard itself". It begins at the birth of modern popular music in the 1920s. At the time record sales had slowed down in the cities due to the advent of the radio. In search of something new to sell to consumers, record producers brought their recording equipment out to the rural areas to record the local musicians.

The story is divided into three parts. The first, *The Big Bang,* focuses the process of finding and recording musicians. An article would be placed in newspapers announcing that recording would take place on a certain day, at a certain place. Many of the musicians travelled very far to have a chance to record their music. The two musical groups focused on in this episode are the Carter Family and Memphis Jug Band, both of whom garnered success from their music through this of recording experience.

The second part *Blood & Soil* focuses on the music of working people including cotton field workers who created the blues, religious groups who sang gospel, and coal mine workers who started protest music. The music created by the artists is at once a reprieve from the day, but also told the stories of their lives. Spotlighted in this episode are Elder Burch, Williamson Brothers and Curry and Charley Patton.

Finally *Out Of The Many, The One* expands the material to more esoteric musical styles that where found across the United States. Eleven year old Joseph Kekuku invented the Hawaiian guitar and its soothing tropical sound. The Hopi Indians recorded their previously private ceremonies for non-tribe members to experience. Female guitarist Lydia Mendoza played Tejano, conjunto, and traditional Mexican-American music. The Breaux Family's popularizes their brand of Cajun music.

Unfortunately for **American Epic** and the viewers there is little footage of the original bands and interviews with them. Their stories are told by their children and grandchildren as well as other musicians. Fortunately all the stories are interesting and compelling and the music is there to be enjoyed. The original sounds are blended with photographs, interviews, and cover versions by those influenced by these early musicians.

The **American Epic** DVD set also includes a recording session conducted by Jack White and T Bone Burnett featuring an original 1920s recording device and loads of current musicians included Elton John, Beck, Willie Nelson, Taj Mahal, and Steve Martin among others. (americanepic.com)

While enjoying these films I also read ***Otis Redding An Unfinished Life*** and ***Preachin' The Blues: The Life & Times Of Son House*** and I started to watch **Vietnam**. My mind's been swirling with the blues, soul and history all month.

BOOKS

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Conflict is Not Abuse: Overstating Harm, Community Responsibility, and the Duty of Repair
by Sarah Schulman
Arsenal Pulp Press, 2016
288 pages | $19.95

Sarah Schulman warns early on that her controversial monograph *Conflict is Not Abuse* "is not a book to be agreed with, an exhibition of evidence or [a] display of proof" (p. 19). She calls instead for "engaged and dynamic interactive collective thinking" to reckon with her text, with the acknowledgement that "some ideas will resonate, others will be rejected, and still others will provoke" (p. 19). The caveat serves on some level to release Schulman from some of the disastrous consequences of her arguments, which focus on "the phenomenon of overstating harm where it begins in its earlier stage as Conflict, before it escalates and explodes into tragedy." Her major argument, that "false accusations of harm are used to avoid acknowledgement of complicity in creating conflict and instead escalate normative conflict to the level of crisis," (p. 28) resonates broadly in a contemporary moment saturated with "callouts" for behaviors as diverse as rape and sexual assault, misogyny and racism, and emotional manipulation and interpersonal abuse. But when the stakes of a text are as high as these, why does Schulman warn us that her lengthy take on callouts, conflict, and abuse may be neither agreeable nor backed up by proof? It is a telling warning that introduces a maddening tendency that pervades the text.

Particularly in the world of punk rock and alternative culture, spreading information about abuse (sometimes paired with calls for boycotts and shunning of an abusive individual) has served as a haphazard means for circumventing state intervention into interpersonal conflict. At the same time, alternative systems for dealing with abuse, like their state-sanctioned counterparts, easily lend themselves to manipulation and misuse by individuals who are interested in neither restorative justice nor accountability. And so the situation that Schulman's text exists to address—that of overstated harm exploding into accusations of abuse, which then cleverly elide any acknowledgement of personal culpability—will probably strike the reader as familiar. We want to and in fact must believe survivors. But we also know that crying abuse is a one-way ticket to a particular kind of clout, which is nonetheless unevenly distributed along racial, class, and gender lines. Accusations of sexual violence, in particular, have a violent history in an American context, where white women's allegations of being raped (or even spoken to) by black men and boys were used to justify countless spectacular instances of torture and murder of the accused. To ignore this history in the contemporary context of so-called "callout culture" is to ignore the pervasive credibility lent to white accusers and suspicion leveled at people of color, even and especially within our purportedly oppositional circles.

Schulman engages this history in her critique of the overstatement of harm, which turns on the titular distinction between conflict and abuse. Perhaps the strongest section of the text is its recollection of the history of activism around domestic violence, which had its roots in feminist calls to end poverty, racism, and misogyny. With the institutionalization of the anti-rape and anti-domestic violence movements of the mid-twentieth century came "government funding, professionalization, and a bureaucratization of anti-rape collectives and community-based services" (p. 83) which in turn further aligned these formerly radical impulses with the state and especially with police. Placing the burden of ending domestic and interpersonal violence on the police and the court system is obviously a contradiction in terms, which has contributed to what Schulman sees as the pervasive conflation of conflict with abuse and the cultural attachment to victimhood that drives the impulse to accuse instead of attempt to diffuse or mediate conflict. Schulman highlights the differential effect of the "vague, elastic, and dishonest" discourse on state responses to rape and domestic violence on black women, who are more likely to be killed by partners than white women, and less likely to be taken seriously when they draw attention to violence against them. In this way, Shulman presents a compelling argument that "identification with the power hierarchy and state apparatus would make bourgeois and white people feel more entitled to make overstated accusations and have fewer concerns that their access might not be justified ethically" (p. 90).

It is characteristic that such a trenchant critique, which should give readers pause about the particular ways in which their alignment with power and statehood can amplify or diminish their claims to both the existence of violence and community responses to it, is followed by arguments that nearly cross the line from critical to borderline reactionary. Schulman establishes a rather binary conception of what she literally calls "real Abuse" (capitalized throughout the text) as opposed to (implicitly fake) lowercase "abuse"; her helpful key to which is which, no less productive than the "believe women" slogan that she bemoans early on in the text, is that real Abuse involves "power over" while mere conflict does not. In keeping with this binary, she claims that violence "should only be used to describe physical violence" such that "emotional conflict where there is no abuse" (p. 92) is no longer described as violence. The purpose of this move is a worthy one: to argue that accusations of abuse should not be the only way to enlist social support. Everyone is worthy of the care and consideration that abuse allegations can sometimes produce for accusers. In turn, collapsing concepts as diverse as discomfort and disagreement with physical threats to one's personal well being, for Schulman, "exploit[s] the rhetoric of victimization" (p. 92) with disastrous consequences for individuals and communities.

Schulman illustrates her particular schema of conflict and abuse with many examples from her personal life as a college professor, writer, and activist. These examples cover a wider range of experiences, from an uncomfortable account of flirting with someone at dinner, Schulman's fear of being misperceived as coming on too strong, a story of Schulman's own totally chill decision to not call a student's blogging about her "stalking," intellectual disagreements cast as "cruel" at academic conferences about trigger warnings (highly relatable, right?), to literal scores of pages dedicated to reproducing Facebook and Twitter arguments about the Israeli siege in Gaza in 2014. These examples, in Schulman's mind, prove the necessity for a more accurate language to describe conflict as well as a commitment from individuals, communities, friend groups, scenes, families, and nations to recognize "real Abuse" when it occurs and facilitate reconciliation when mere conflict arises.

Schulman has a particular attachment to face-to-face conversation as the means to de-escalating conflict before it explodes. She identifies digital media (texts and emails) as the culprit in many situations where harm is overstated and results in shunning. "Email," she claims, "creates repression and anxiety" (p. 45). She goes on that "there is no reason why people do not return phone calls except for the power-play of not answering," and declares categorically that "no one is obligated to obey a unidirectional order that has not been discussed" in the case of emails sent with the intent of cutting off contact with a given person. For Schulman, digital media is roughly synonymous with escalation, because it cuts off avenues of bodily perception that necessarily breed empathy among conflicted parties. "People need to speak, look, smell, touch, experience vocal tone, facial expression, make jokes, sit back, shift gears, and evolve their ideas and feelings in front of each other in order to produce meaning," (p. 46) she writes. Moreover, the contemporary phenomenon of ghosting strikes Schulman as an intensification of conflict rather than indicative of a deep aversion to it: "Silence itself can be an escalation," she writes.

This fetishization of in-person conversation strikes me as a misreading of both the nature of technology and the digital contexts in which callout culture has garnered its immense force, particularly for younger people. Many conflicts originate online, amid the elisions that text- and image-based communications imply. In-person reconciliation is not always an available option, and certainly not always a desirable option, for people whose safety may be genuinely threatened by digitally based conflicts. Rather than discount the medium of digital communication as inherently obfuscating, critically engaged readers might imagine the relative advantages and disadvantages of a given medium in discussing a particular conflict. Schulman's polemic attachment to meatspace-based conflict resolution further highlights the limit-cases that occupied my mind while reading her text. In an instance of sexual assault, where boundaries are variable, communication is poor, and misapprehensions are frequent, I can easily imagine a situation in which ghosting, or asking for no further contact with someone via email, would deplete less of a survivor's energy than Schulman's rigorous requirement of an in-person conversation. Schulman imagines that de-escalation tactics will benefit both parties, as well as scenes, communities, and friend groups, equally. But it is hard to imagine someone who has been "really Abused" gaining much from such an exchange, and Schulman's insistence that everyone commune over every instance of conflict that they experience strikes me as somewhat entitled, and even dangerous in certain contexts. Not everyone has to make time to talk to you; not everyone has to email you back.

Perhaps the particular danger of this text is the thoroughgoing scrutiny it applies to survivors of abuse. The rules of engagement with conflict that Schulman lays out (always talk about it, never email about it, don't ghost, don't refuse contact unconditionally) make sense in instances where investment in a given relationship is high, and where conflict genuinely isn't abuse. But it's easy to imagine a sentences like "refusing to be shunned for unjust, nonexistent, or absurd reasons is not 'stalking'" and "resisting unjustified punishment is not Abuse" (p. 67) in the mouths of the manipulative and violent perpetrators of sexual and interpersonal violence who pervade our scenes, who learn our languages of resistance and twist them around to their own ends. "Power over" versus "not power over" is a handy distinction but not an all-encompassing rubric for understanding the intricacies of coercion, abuse, and violence. Schulman insists that "real Abuse" can never be mutual, that violence can only be physical, that all conflicts must be resolved. But I don't see those lines as clearly as she does, and I don't see conflict as a unilateral opportunity for building community with people who have crossed boundaries.

Of course, Schulman's schema is useful because it attempts to stem the slippery-slope descent into the kind of fetishization of conflict that entrenches difference, intentionally isolates, and manipulates the language of abuse to dispose of those most vulnerable members of social scenes. The righteous arbitration of who is worthy and unworthy of transformative justice and who is sentenced to social death via isolation is emblematic of the ways in which alternative and resistant scenes have invested in a politics of disposability culture. Porpentine writes that "Feminist / queer spaces are more willing to criticize people than abusive systems because they want to reserve the right to use those systems for their own purposes. [...] Attacking people can be politically viable [...] where your status as a good feminist is dependent on constantly rooting out evil." This thesis essentially aligns with Schulman's: inasmuch as radicals, or punks, or queers and feminists can agree that violence is bad and should be dealt with apart from state structures, the alternative methods devised in particular social contexts just as often rest on the power of the relatively privileged to expel less powerful individuals from the spaces they run. This fact should demand that abuse and conflict be treated with more attention—and more nuanced language—than is typically allowed.

Schulman applies her arguments to a diverse set of situations: HIV criminalization in Canada, the construction of queer and chosen families, Al-Anon, pop psychology, and the Israeli occupation of Palestine, among others. It is difficult to align the exact contours of her fundamental thesis about the overstatement of harm to each of these contexts with equal efficacy: why should a singular analytic apply as well to someone who won't email you back and the IDF? It is also curious, particularly given Schulman's aversion to digital media, that nearly a third of the book consists of a lengthy chapter that reproduces scores of Tweets and Facebook posts that unfolded in Schulman's own discussion of the siege of Gaza in 2014. The intent is to display what Shulman calls "Supremacy ideology" in action, by which the trauma of the Holocaust has driven the Israeli state to continually produce Palestinians as monstrous threats to their livelihood when the vast difference in military of the two polities makes this demonstrably untrue. This extended meditation feels like a stretch in relation to the general argument of the text, as might be expected from an argument scaled to so many contexts.

Admittedly, I have glossed many of the contexts that Schulman discusses, if only because to consider them with much nuance is difficult in the space of a review. Frankly, it's also difficult in the space of a book. Still, Schulman provides compelling critiques of demands for safety ("safety is an acquisition of power, often dependent on unjust structures of subjugation to satisfy the threatened person or group's need for control") and draws provocative parallels between the person with "unprocessed Trauma" and the "Supremacist" who in her reading "conceptualize themselves as 'weak' or 'endangered' unless others around them are controlled, repressed, punished, or destroyed'" (p. 154). I buy this line of argument, but the comparison is an uneasy one, typical of the reasoning that characterizes the text in general. An overall appeal to reason and normative sanity—in the face of unprocessed trauma and "hysterical" responses to threatening situations, which in turn escalate conflicts by claiming abuse—uncomfortably casts those who overstate harm as in need of logical, face-to-face intervention so that they can receive new information and understand their own role in escalating conflict. If only we all had a friend like Schulman, who would not rest until we saw for ourselves how we have participated in conflicted situations.

Schulman's, ultimately, is a utopian vision, in which all individuals are equally invested in a certain vision of living in common, which in turn invests conflict resolution with greater import. I have lost a number of friends to both escalated conflicts and accountability processes gone awry, and so this text cuts right to the bone. I hope, for the sake of assault survivors of many kinds, that the Schulmanian schema is not used discount narratives of assault and abuse as "fake," and not to force contact between perpetrators and the people they have hurt. I conversely hope that the discourse of accountability and abuse, the performative and righteous attachment to shunning people you know little about, and the proliferation of disposability culture do not continue to mark the culture that punks and others produce for themselves. I hope that Schulman's insights can be read alongside the critical dangers lurking in her arguments.

These issues—of accountability, community, conflict, and violence—will only become more relevant as governmental structures continue to fail the most vulnerable members of our social world, as state violence and capital continue to isolate us from ourselves and one another. Schulman's attachment to duty of repair is hard to stomach from the perspective of those who have been violated repeatedly, but it is necessary to imagine a social world worth fighting to preserve in order to ever attempt to live in one. If we must stake out communal boundaries to survive, then so be it. But if our sense of political efficacy rests on the expulsion of vulnerable others, it is useful—if deeply uncomfortable—to critique the alternative structures and discourses that have led us to such an attachment. Schulman's text is a step in that direction. I don't agree with most of it, but indeed, as Schulman states from the very beginning, that was never the point.

—Lyle St

HEY PUNK!

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RECORDS

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ACTIVE MINDS – "The Art Of Mass Distraction" LP

At the risk of making a fool of myself fawning over the 30-plus year legacy of this band, I will simply (try to) review the material before me and trust that the well-educated readers of this fine rag are already familiar with ACTIVE MINDS. Don't let the opening track (which sounds like a weird mash up of anarcho-punk, FLOGGING MOLLY, and European black metal) fool you—it's a teaser that doesn't set the tone as much as it gives you a moment to settle in for what is to come. And what is to come? Breakneck high energy HC / thrash that (*still!*) harnesses DISCHARGE and HERESY but somehow squeezes the melody of old UK punk into the mix. "Swimming Against The Tide" might be my favorite song on the record...but then the catchy rager "Wouldn't It Be Better To Just Ignore These Fools?" starts the second half and *that* becomes my favorite song... and *then* I start to realize that every song on this record is a banger. ACTIVE MINDS mix things up enough to hold your interest and keep stoking you repeatedly over the course of their sixth album. Whether it's heavy, churning metal-punk, classic UK punk, Motörcharged D-beat, or more generic tuneless thrash that you need, it's all here somewhere and ACTIVE MINDS move seamlessly between subgenres without disrupting the flow. Legends. (WN)

(Loony Tunes / Maloka / Muerte A Tipo / SPHC / Wahn Fried)

THE ASOUND / INTERCOURSE – split EP

INTERCOURSE play seismic music accompanied by slightly spoken lyrics as MINUTEMEN meets AGORAPHOBIC NOSEBLEED. Sinister hardcore that oozes with denseness and punctuated with tight hardcore aggression. ASOUND are more cosmically-inclined and rock'n'roll. The drums rip through heavy MELVINS grungy tracks like a southern metal train. Both bands play distinctly different styles on the heavier spectrum, while both sound anti-metropolitan and in tune with a dark forest. Stylish classy art on both sides. Recommended for salty sasquachian metalheads. (JR)

(Tsuguri)

BAD DADDIES – "Over 30 Singles" LP

I'd never heard of the BAD DADDIES. Now they've got an LP out of 30 of their greatest hits. Most of these songs have been previously released. Side A has about nineteen songs on it, which is too many. It's mid-tempo, female fronted punk rock / hardcore. There's a certain awkwardness to it, which is actually a positive thing. It's also pretty fuzzy. Like it sounds like they maybe have the amps on eleven, when they were only meant to go to ten. Again, this is actually a good thing. I still think nineteen songs on one side of a record is too many, but I really enjoyed most of them. (KK)

(Emotional Response)

BAD LUCK – "Le Motard / New World"

Swiss hard rock from the late '70s / early '80s sweet-spot. You know what that means? Yup, it was blogged earlier in 2013 and reissued now (in a dibble-edition of 100 copies) for know-it-all butt-clenchers (like me, sometimes). Long out of print, of course. The punk heard here seems accidental, as "Le Motard" is clearly positioned as some kinda biker / bonehead inspired ruler. I'm not drooling, although its appeal is obvious, even with the tune dragging a bit toward the end there. Truthfully, the wimp-rawk "New World" outdoes it at every turn in my humble, completely fuckin' over it opinion. Do I like this? I barely even remember it. (MC)

(Static Age)

THE BRAIN – "Too Much To Dream / First Steps"

Two songs from Canada's the BRAIN that straddle the line between psych rock and punk, but not in the same HAWKWIND-inspired way as DESTRUCTION UNIT. Out of the two cuts, only the B-side truly succeeds. The A-side, "Too Much To Dream" spends its undeserved six-minute runtime attempting to head towards catharsis but instead sounding like a rambling half-baked pantomime of a bad trip. "First Steps," which should have been the A-Side, is an excellent motorik adventure through haunted desert landscapes that is both evocative and energetic. I won't be surprised if the BRAIN has opened for THEE OH SEES, DEERHUNTER, or a lesser Kranky Records artist. (JD)

(High Fashion Industries)

CARTOUCHE – "A Venir" CD

Singer Geraldine must get this a lot (sorry!) but her vocal style reminds me so much of Magalie from fellow chanson punk band LA FRACTION, which of course is meant as a compliment since both are *incredible* vocalists. That being said CARTOUCHE is sorta LA FRACTION-lite to me...just in sound, not in spirit. They've got a nice melodic punk thing going but they're a bit more laid back rock. I don't mean this comparison to undermine CARTOUCHE at all—it's just the most undeniable and accessible reference, and it's likely that many

attendees of squats and social centers across Europe have danced hard to this band since their formation in 2004. Also, the more outspoken anti-fascist feminist bands that are out there, the better. (MA)
(Acontrario / Fire and Flames / Maloka / Rudy's Back)

CAT AND THE UNDERDOGS – "The Cops Are Coming" EP
This band looks and seems Scandinavian to me. It's a nice mix of NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS catchiness and TURBONEGRO cock rock. The title track rips some licks from "Nervous Breakdown" and most of it isn't too godawful but they could use more edge to stand out from the pack they've chosen (which is huge). Maybe more actual contact with brutal law enforcement would help. Move to any city in America right now for a while and we'll talk. (RO)
(Kite)

CAT PARTY – "Rest In Post" LP
Anyone who played shows from 2012-2016 remembers the JOY DIVISION inspired goth revival that thrived in basements, churches, coffee shops or wherever punk shows were played. You probably caught this band if you were among those in attendance of those shows or playing in bands on the West Coast, and if you're from Orange County you're probably intimately familiar with them. This is their swan song on Orange County's heralded long-lasting Hostage Records. It's a collection of singles as well as older unreleased and new songs with a thoughtful insert filled with liner notes about the songs. (P$)
(Hostage)

CHANNEL 3 – "Put 'Em Up" LP
CHANNEL 3 was among my favorite early California hardcore bands. They always had a catchiness about them and they will forever remind me of my college girlfriend. (Insert awkward silence here.) Seeing that they've got a new album honestly makes me a little nervous. Should they have hung it up? The photo on the insert makes me think they've got two original members and two new members (that's totally a guess). This new record is catchy, sing-along punk. One thing I've noticed about older bands that either get back together or keep going: they tend to be less straightforward. They make things complicated. I think they start to believe that they're "artists." I also think I tend to be harder on these bands than I might be on a newer band. I like this. It's a little less hardcore than they used to be, but if they were that same old hardcore band, that'd be kind of depressing. Thumbs up. (KK)
(TKO)

CHARLIE & THE LESBIANS – "The Lost Boy" EP
Negative bullshit from some snowy European hellhole. You get the sense that Chuck worships BRAINBOMBS and the SPITS (the "not fun" aspect thereof) in almost equal measure, but lacks the skill to adequately channel either. Guess that means this sounds like SWINEHOOD? Whatever. I hate myself and you and all of them and I'm never going to listen to this ever again. (MC)
(Momentum Collective)

C.H.E.W. / RASH – split EP
Nasty and relentless no rules Midwest hardcore. I'll take the first 30 seconds of the C.H.E.W. side over 90% of the punk I've heard in 2017, and the few minutes that follow certainly hold their own. High-pitched vocals and hard driving jerky hardcore with start / stop riffs that catch you by surprise with buried hooks from out of nowhere. RASH are more blunt—two low end distorted deposits to fill your account with filth. There is no nuance on the RASH side (and none was expected), just dirty and in your face hardcore punk. (WN)
(Slugsalt)

CITY MOUSE – "Get Right" LP
This is catchy, female fronted punk rock that is kind of soft. It's poppy and pretty, but I feel like it needs more of an edge than it's got. I love female fronted punk bands, but the vocals here are mixed too high, which almost makes the music seems like an afterthought. (KK)
(It's Alive)

COMPLETE CRAP – "Youth" LP
Off-kilter German hardcore, at times heavy and burly with a dark intensity similar to DEAD AND GONE. Then the tempo and the tone flip to something akin to a post-punk SQUIRREL BAIT. Tightly wound musicianship effortlessly switches between metallic math punk and reverb ghost melody. If anything, the vocals are something of a conundrum; the lyrics are in English but the delivery is gruffly Teutonic, at times contrary to the mood set by the music. Overall, there's more that works than doesn't, so I'd consider this earnestly DIY project a success. (AM)
(self-released)

CØNDITIØN – "Subjugated Fate" EP
CØNDITIØN are eternally reliable purveyors of vicious heavy hardcore that nods at many genres while kneeling to none. Whether they're offering up a full-speed D-beat driven assault or riding a mid-tempo metallic crust riff, they're always masters of the material and they always sound like CØNDITIØN first and foremost. This new release is probably their most confident-sounding to date, four tracks of tight, lean hardcore that touch on everything from DISCHARGE to SACRILEGE to POISON IDEA. The huge, roomy recording is a big plus, highlighting the powerful bottom end of their sound while leaving plenty of room for the frantic vocals to shine. This record was over way too soon for my tastes—I wish it were twice as long. (AU)
(Iron Lung)

CRIMPSHRINE – "Duct Tape Soup" LP
Somehow the magicians at Numero Group were able to thread all the needles and, against all odds, exorcise all the CRIMPSHRINE records from their shallow graves. Which was undoubtedly difficult and crucial. With every passing year, you tend to see fewer kids wearing bootlegged CRIMPSHINE shirts, fewer bands covering their songs, and fewer kids even knowing who this band is. But just as this band fades from punk's collective memory, we now have these reissues to elevate their

ACTIVE MINDS
The Age Of Mass Distraction

the ASOUND
Slugsalt

CAT AND THE UNDERDOGS
THE COPS ARE COMING EP
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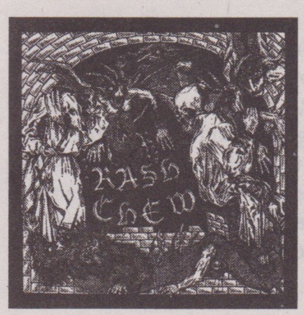
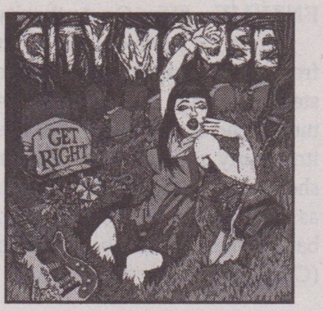
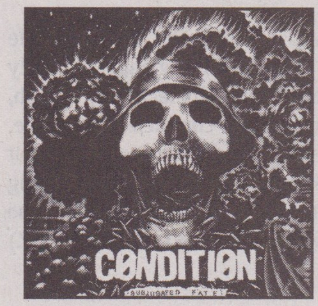






DARK / LIGHT
KILL SOME TIME

accessibility somewhat. Lookout records, despite all their faults, was important because it acted as a gateway into punk for an entire generation of pop punk kids. Kids who were enamored by GREEN DAY music videos dug a little deeper and found out how ugly and fantastic punk could truly be with bands like BLATZ, FILTH, and CRIMPSHRINE. But regardless of historical context, these songs are amazing. Of all the late '80s pop punk, this band cuts the deepest and their riffs hook the strongest. If you never really gave this band a chance before, now is the time. And this record is the one to start with. (FS)
(Numero Group)

CRIMPSHRINE – "7 Song Demo + Berkeley Sampler" LP

It's hard to explain the significance of CRIMPSHIRE to a whole generation of punks. The recordings were never that great, the playing was sometimes suspect and the vocals were way off key but maybe that's why it's so great. Maybe it showed people that pop punk didn't have to be slick, overly hook laden, and always about girls and rock'n'roll. Even if you had never played an instrument in your life, you would think, "I could do that" despite the fact that it was something you could never match. There are a number of reasons why it is exciting that this LP, which is pretty close to being a reissue of the "9 Song Demo + Berkeley Sampler" cassette, is out there for all to hear. A personal one being that years ago someone stole the bootleg copy that I owned when they broke into my car. I hope they listened to it. More importantly, this is a historical document. Most of the seven CRIMPSHRINE songs that made it onto this LP were released on later records ("I Don't Know Why" being the only one that wasn't). They don't sound too different from those later recordings but it's still worth hearing. It's also a plus that the sound quality for those songs is pretty good, like they actually had the master recordings. The rest of the record is taken up by six East Bay bands doing two songs each, mostly from the same era or with some of the same band members. Not going to even try to get into a family tree of who was in what, but luckily the folks at Numero always have great packaging and includes a poster with a somewhat confusing, incomplete, and apparently controversial East Bay punk tree that Aaron drew. The bands include SAG (Aaron and Jeff's band from the early '80s that wasn't on the original cassette and probably sounds like the first band that you were in), BASIC RADIO, SOUP, KWIKWAY, SWEET BABY JESUS, and DISTORTED TRUTH. The sound quality on these tracks isn't great, or even good. In fact it often sounds like it came from a cassette that was played a couple times too many. It is in no way some sort of complete overview of East Bay punk at the time, but as the title says, it's a sampler. On the whole, this isn't just a trip down memory lane. The songs are good and they still hold up after all these years. What might be nostalgia for some could be good starting point for others. (PA)
(Numero Group)

CRIMPSHRINE – "The Sound Of A New World Being Born" LP

I am about to completely, and with only a little embarrassment, put this band on a super high pedestal. Before I do, however, I think it is incredibly important to first acknowledge that the lead singer, Jeff Ott, revealed over a decade ago that he sexually assaulted a number of women. Although I am glad that he brought this to light himself and has tried to make amends, I am not an apologist, and I do not defend him. It's fucking gross, and every time I listen to this band that I love, I realize that I have forced myself to forget all the details, which is also pretty gross. Well, here's the review: Is it completely insane that Numero Group is reissuing this CRIMPSHRINE discography? Yes, it is. Although well known for reissuing some awesome shit, I always likened Numero to that of a brilliant wingnut army buddy of my dad. Sure, he's really fucking cool in small doses, and I would gladly get stuck for a week drooling over their badass record collection, but I'd never expect to be able to talk to them about cool shit like CRIMPSHRINE! If for some fucked up reason you aren't already the biggest CRIMPSHRINE fan in your shitty town, or the older punks forgot to put this band's songs on your mixtape last week, I'll fill you in. This late '80s Berkeley band was gritty as fuck, with guitars so heavy with effects that it is hard to tell one note from the next, in the pocket and almost funk bass playing, and weird as fuck roto toms that, I shit you not, somehow sound fucking perfect. Vocals so strained and pissed off, sounding like Popeye the Sailor way before it was cool, and the lyrics are desperate and passionate. Let's not forget the hooks, though. There may be more effects coming through that amp than actual guitar sounds, but the filthy, creaky, stained, passed out pop hooks are un-fuckin'-deniable. If you are the type of person that cares, the remastering sounds good. Maybe this might not be your thing, but you might also be a fucking idiot. Maybe you can't find this band's records anymore, because they get snatched up because they're fucking great. So go do yourself a favor and pick these up. (DZ)
(Numero Group)

DANCER – "I'm Not Giving Up / Teenage Punk"

This latest Dancer single, part of their never-ending hit parade, continues to cement their position as schmaltz pop's prime slimers. "I'm Not Giving Up" is AM gold, Jack: a sweet'n'tender pumper with a sticky hook that's tenderized for nearly four minutes. I admire their know-how and patience, allowing the tune to seep into your pores in a very '70s, sensitive hoodlum way. "Teenage Punk" adequately examines the virtues of adolescent glue-sniffin' and even manages a subtle synth quick-step, seasoning the whole affair. As good a late-summer soundtrack for backseat love as there could be in 2017. DANCER's niche—shooting for pop highs while embracing punk's lows—places them in an almost timeless class of degenerate heart-throb rockers. (MC)
(DIG!)

DARK / LIGHT – "Kill Some Time" LP

Loved the previous release by this Portland band, and this record is even better! Do you still get excited every time you hear *Wild Gift*? Me too! This band kinda uses that as a template to start, but layers it with a clear love for death rock and MASSHYSTERI. It can get a little heavy on the flanger and reverb at times, but you can't deny those hooks. What they do best is creating that mid-tempo song that's catchy as hell. Super fun stuff! (FS)
(Dirt Cult)

DD MOTO – LP

Despite this record's good moments, it falls pretty flat. A simple trio from Ohio who try to tip the hat to some killer garage and early dirty rock. While that does show, somewhat, it really lacks any oomph, anger, or passion that would really make this completely tolerable. Fortunately, this did not come with a lyric sheet because what little bit I could make out was pretty rough...except for the song about sitting around sipping on ginger ale. I like to think of old former drunks at the bar drinking Shirley Temples, getting wild, and loving rock music. (DZ)
(self-released)

DEBILS – LP

Static Age has uncovered yet another impossibly rare slice of Swiss Punk's origins. Reportedly 500 were pressed, and nearly 300 of them returned back to the band's manager, which supposedly were distributed between the other band members, so good luck finding one! I've only ever seen one or maybe two for sale. Musically DEBILS is totally enjoyable (mostly female-fronted) melodic punk sung in French, with many memorable songs and only a couple filler tracks. Not as thrilling as early TNT, but it probably could've been with a punchier production. This reissue is presented in an indestructible tip-on cardboard gatefold sleeve and nice foldout insert with lyrics, photos, fliers, and retrospective in Deutsch and English. Great stuff! Also love how they straight-up ripped off the tune from the CRISIS track "UK '79" and named the song "Crisis." Ha! (MA)
(Static Age)

DIVA CUP / SHORT ORDER – split EP

Raw and ripping guitar-free hardcore from DIVA CUP. It's fine, and the energy is high, but the absence of all guitar frequencies and the zero fucks given recording and delivery renders tracks that might be legit burners relatively forgettable. I bet there is beer everywhere when they play live, and it might be pretty wild. SHORT ORDER get my attention right off the bat with a track called "Fuck Your Safe Space" (might want to include lyrics for this one, fellas, unless you want everyone except shitbags to assume that you are potential shitbags), but then I dropped the needle and I heard eight blasting burners along the lines of HOLY SHIT! but without the hooks. They also have a penchant for "in and out" micro mosh stomps and "what just happened there?" rock'n'roll tendencies that are gone in a flash. Like their record mates, SHORT ORDER are also raw, also high energy, also zero fucks given, also "fine." (WN)
(Minimal Care)

ELLEN AND THE DEGENERATES – "Herb Alert" EP

ELLEN AND THE DEGENERATES are through and through moored to RED AUNTS and the MUFFS records from the mid '90s. It's all spot on: the fuzzy guitars, the driving mid-tempo rock songs, and the singer's style. These songs have totally relatable and personal lyrics, and the music's written well. (LP)
(What's For Breakfast)

ENZYME – "Piss On Authority" EP

Hot on the heels of their debut EP comes the second vinyl offering from this Australian noize hardcore troop. To be honest, it's a bit of a step down from the *Abuse of Power* EP. I don't know if it's the short turnaround time or what, but these songs just don't scratch the noize itch nearly as hard. All the trappings are there: the booming vocals, the sheets of guitar noise, the poppy bass, and the 1-2 drumming are a solid as ever but this one just feels a bit same-y and uninspired. I hope the band takes their time before jumping into the studio again. (AU)
(Crust War / Hardcore Victim)

FALSE PROFIT – "War Journal" EP

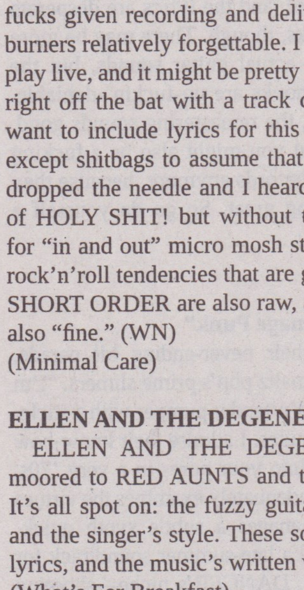
There are a lot of odd ingredients in this bubblegum hardcore soup. Think PENNYWISE worship with Dexter from the OFFSPRING fronting, especially with the whooo-oooo-oooos from "Troll Eye" trying hard to make the latter jealous of their whoo-ability. On the first track of the B-side, "Epic," the guitar intro went on so long, it made IRON MAIDEN seem efficient. The title track at least plays around with some fun GWAR-like guitar work in between spaces of the same old shouting. It makes it more fun to imagine this band fighting a giant dinosaur on stage instead of acting like tough guy bros. (RH)
(Pillage)

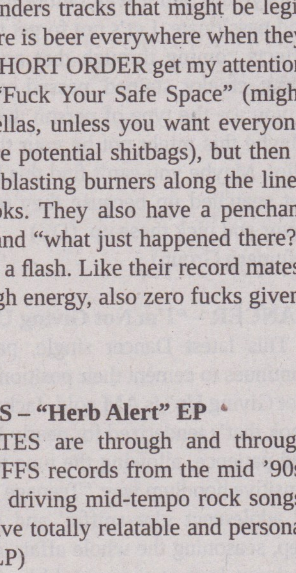
FANG – "Rise Up!" CD

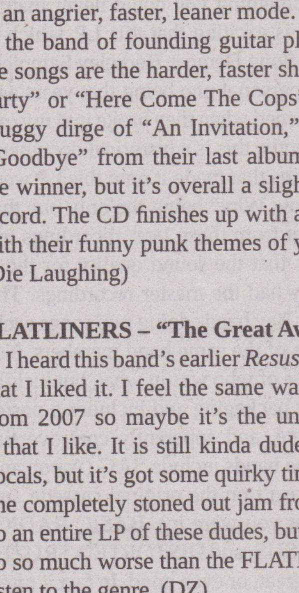
This band has had a long history with *MRR*, good and bad, starting with issue #0 and going from scrappy teen gutter punk years, through drugs, murder, and prison, to reformation, recovery, and the current boycott of 924 Gilman. All of this is available on the internet, so I'll simply concentrate on the music. This release is more of an EP than a full album, clocking in at barely twenty minutes. *Rise Up!* finds the band in an angrier, faster, leaner mode. Unfortunately the brief reappearance in the band of founding guitar player Tom Flynn has ended. Most of the songs are the harder, faster shouting style of say "House Wrecking Party" or "Here Come The Cops" rather than the slightly deathrocky, druggy dirge of "An Invitation," "Damaging Dose," or the excellent "Goodbye" from their last album. I'd say the title track is definitely the winner, but it's overall a slight disappointment to me after the last record. The CD finishes up with a wacky number that goes right along with their funny punk themes of yore. (RO)
(Die Laughing)

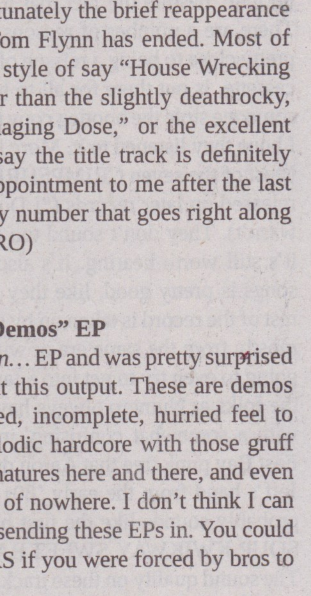
FLATLINERS – "The Great Awake Demos" EP

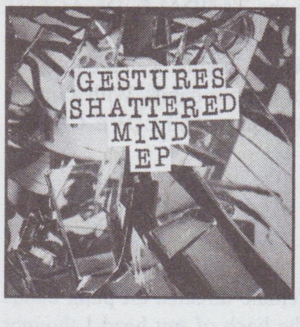
I heard this band's earlier *Resuscitation...* EP and was pretty surprised that I liked it. I feel the same way about this output. These are demos from 2007 so maybe it's the unpolished, incomplete, hurried feel to it that I like. It is still kinda dudely melodic hardcore with those gruff vocals, but it's got some quirky time signatures here and there, and even one completely stoned out jam from out of nowhere. I don't think I can do an entire LP of these dudes, but keep sending these EPs in. You could do so much worse than the FLATLINERS if you were forced by bros to listen to the genre. (DZ)
(Fat Wreck)

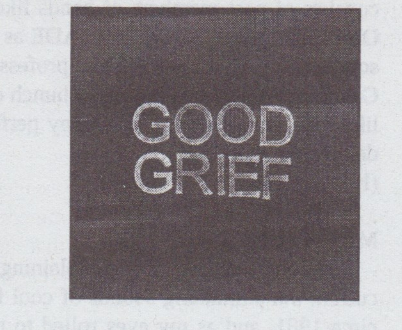


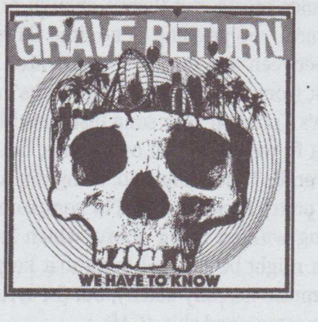


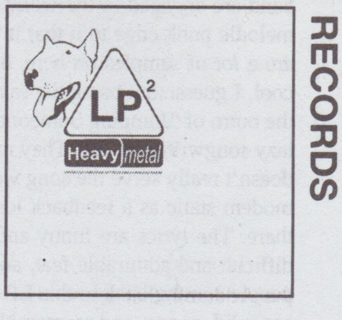












FRENCH KISS – 12"

This is a four song, one-sided 12" that fits more into the alternative rock category. Overall it has a feel somewhere between later HÜSKER DÜ and late '80s alternative bands like the CONNELLS, BUFFALO TOM or GUADALCANAL DIARY. While most of the songs fall a bit flat (you might want to skip the one with the rock'n'roll piano part), "Different Strokes" has an extremely catchy, head bobbing verse. They do dip a little more into the punk side of things with the final track but it's a bit of a trudger that doesn't stand out at all. (PA)
(self-released)

GESTURES – "Shattered Mind" EP

This is some distorted, messy garage punk from Sweden. Overblown guitars with indifferent, lethargic vocals. The singer sounds laid-back in an aggressive way. It's noisy fun. (CK)
(Push My Buttons / Svartljud)

GOOD GRIEF – "Eat Shit" EP

I suppose it's fine. They do keep the songs short. Honestly, this is sort of unremarkable, fuzzy, catchy, punk. There's nothing wrong with it, it just doesn't have that thing that draws you in. Certainly the muted recording / production didn't do them any favors. I wonder if I'd feel differently about this if it were presented differently. It really does seem catchy and likable. (KK)
(Desert Hospitality / National Southwestern)

GRAVE RETURN – "We Have To Know" LP

This band plays excellent melodic punk that bounces around but ultimately defies subgenres. They clearly have a working sense of the good, harder-edged side of melodic music from the last few decades (I hear bits of both HÜSKER DÜ and CHEAP TRICK, among others), but have enough pop punk sensibility that they could probably still do a record for Fat (not that they should!) that would have a chance of being decent. Some songs are conducive to running around with your friends, others serve as a soundtrack for existential despair. "Fuck Williamsburg" is the sole faster song with hardcore vocals. All are well-written and arranged, with plenty of hooks and layers. (DG)
(self-released)

HEAVY METAL – "LP2" LP

If you liked their first LP, no need to read on—definitely grab this one too! For the uninitiated, HEAVY METAL is a riot of a recording project by one or two (not sure) Australians living in Berlin. The nasally and cheeky vocals and garage sound almost place this in the category of teenage wasteoid, self-recorded *KBD* era, but the sheer cleverness and calculation date it to our current world of being able to synthesize all that great music out there and make this kind of record. By "this kind of record" I mean one that's so full of hits and memorable moments that there's practically nothing I would change about it. This record almost feels more cohesive than their last one, as it has a conceptual feeling to it, though I'm still trying to decode the concept. Wrap it up with the most ridiculous and frankly awesome rendition of "Do Ya Think I'm Sexy," and I've actually been effectively distracted from all the horrific crap that is going on around me right now (until it's followed by a sound clip from one of the transphobic scenes from *Silence of the Lambs*…maybe part of the concept?). (MA)
(Static Age)

HIVE – "Parasitic Twin" LP

Second full-length offering from this Minneapolis outfit, and I dare say that *Parasitic Twin* is even more devastating than the first. With a blatant ear towards the low end tonnage and Sweden via Portland guitar leads of the early '00s, HIVE approach their hardcore with the nuance of a steamroller until ominous noise drenched respites like the instrumental title track and the introduction to "Common Ancestor" provide much some needed space to breathe. The concentration is on a massive wall of D-beat, and a casual listen might leave you with this sole impression, but HIVE are a desperate act breathing welcome life into a subgenre that is often phoned in. The lyrics, the presentation, the delivery, and yeah, the fuckin' riffs are all on point, and this record is a welcome addition to this polluted world. (WN)
(Crown & Throne)

HOLOGRAMS – "Surrender" LP

This record kicks off with a haunting and eerie synth melody that made me feel like I was lost in a Dario Argento or John Carpenter film. HOLOGRAMS plays a varied mix of rock, post-punk, and darkwave. Some tracks, like "Ikaros," are melodic, ambient, dark and greatly rely on the presence of the synthesizer. These tracks seem to take groups like DEAD CAN DANCE as a reference point. I appreciate this approach, much more so than the campier and goofier side of goth / darkwave. In other moments, the band takes a much more straightforward post-punk approach, along the lines of DIÄT or the BELLICOSE MINDS with vocal melodies like those of the CURE. I was excited that at some moments the dark and somber melodies reminded me of FLIEHENDE STURME while other moments moved in a more indie rock direction, which I didn't appreciate. Overall, there were several moments of atmospheric synthesizer and somber melodies which really caught my attention but my attention was lost in other moments that felt overproduced and too close to mainstream rock for my taste. In this LP, HOLOGRAMS definitely explores many different approaches to playing "dark" music in a way that is hard to pin down to one subgenre. (BP)
(Push My Buttons)

HUMILIATION – "Laughing Wall" EP

Big, dark, abrasive hardcore with angsty, tortured vocals. A couple of songs are fast with nice, clunky drumming, while the other two are lethargic lurchers with shimmering guitar picking, and everything is competent if not quite captivating. I have a feeling they're a good live act. (DG)
(High Fashion Industries)

ISS – "Endless Pussyfooting" LP

This is the first vinyl release from North Carolina's ISS: fourteen tracks of dancey, trancey, pounding synth-punk. Many elements of this

band are engaged in the world of dance music, but there's enough of a melodic punk edge to it that it will have you pogoing in no time. There are a *lot* of samples on here, both between and during songs, which is cool, I guess...but using the sax hook from "Oh Bondage, Up Yours" or the outro of "Jumping Someone Else's Train" in your song just feels like lazy songwriting to me. They make it fit well into their own songs, but it doesn't really serve the song well overall. That being said, using dial-up modem static as a feedback loop is pretty fucking cool. No complaints there. The lyrics are funny and biting without being goofy, which is a difficult and admirable feat, and that might be the real thing that keeps people coming back to this LP. The music is really catchy, but the lyrics are solid, poppy, and memorable. It's some good shit. (GH)
(Erste Theke Tontrager)

JACK – "Armee And Fuck-Off" EP

Here's something you don't hear every day. Super limited to 100 numbered copies reissue of obscure AF Swiss punk corker from 1981 (long gone, of course). I've never heard of JACK, and according to the liners, the band has been a complete mystery until the elusive Jack was tracked down for this reissue in 2016. Musically speaking, the A-side is jagged French riff-punk with deadpan vocals. The B-side has more of a post-punk sound. (GB)
(Static Age)

JACK & THE RIPPERS – "No Desire / I Feel Like A Tram" 45 & tape

This is a deliciously deluxe reissue of the only single by Swiss '77–'78 punks JACK & THE RIPPERS. The two songs of anglocentric first wave punk on display here should be classics of the era / genre. "No Desire" has a power pop catchiness reminiscent of the OUTCASTS or EDDIE AND THE HOTRODS, while "I Feel Like A Tram" has the detached gloom of the ADVERTS or the RINGS. The reissued single is available on its own, but I am holding the long out of print premium upgrade limited boxed set, which includes a poster, old ads, and a cassette of seven other unreleased tracks that really ought to find their way onto vinyl ASAP. (AM)
(Incognito / Static Age)

КАЛЬК – LP

This is some ripping, yet thoughtful Russian hardcore. With extra thick guitars, and harsh, screaming vocals, they sound like a harder MURDER CITY DEVILS. Like that band, they have keyboard parts, which I could take or leave. The Russian lyrics are translated into English, and are well-crafted condemnations of sexism and gender norms. Overall, this shit rocks pretty fucking hard, so check it out! (BA)
(Hardcore For The Losers / JanML / Maha Von Lobeck / MarderschadenDIY / Polar Summer / Tadizo)

LOVE CANAL – "If It Ain't Broken, Break It!!!" LP

This band was once known as "OC's worst punk band."I'm not really sure if that's a bad thing or a good thing, but I like this record. It definitely has a catchy SoCal skate punk vibe. LOVE CANAL started in 1982 and this is their first LP in 30 years. The changing lineup now consists of past members of bands like the VANDALS, DI, AGENT ORANGE, and YOUTH BRIGADE as well as many other bands. The sound of the album is clean and professional, having been recorded by Cameron Webb who recorded a bunch of famous bands. With a lineup like that, you can't expect sloppy performances and LOVE CANAL delivers the goods. (DB)
(Hostage)

MARAUDEUR – LP

Someone I know was complaining about all the bands that are current but simulating sounds of cool female directed art punk bands circa 1981, and as my eyes rolled to the back of my head I thought of the past 17 years watching historically accurate reenactment all-dude HC bands play the same idea night after night in show spaces across America...Finally! There is an avalanche of genius wild nervous damage sound for all kindsa girls that have ELECTRIC EELS and MALARIA! problems. This does sound like something from one of those *Subnormal Girls* comps, but that is what I want out of life. I want frantic / nervous energy, collapsing keyboards, sputtering rhythms, and cool female vocals over the end of the world Ballardian creep sound. This LP is a breath of air, of ideas and charisma and cool. (LG)
(Bruit Direct)

MARTIN SAVAGE GANG – "Help Me" EP

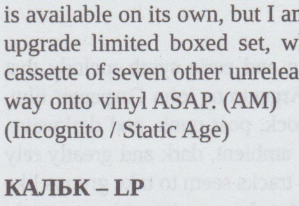
Yes, he of the BLACKS, DIXIE BUZZARDS, and LOCOMOTIONS has returned with a new (ish) gang and an augmented bag o' tricks. Seems to me Mr. Savage has always been obsessed with gents sharing the "Oblivian" name, and MSG trades the buzz-blues for something more soulfully (ahem) adult. Timeless rock song-craft and sincerity seem to carry more weight than all-balls scree this go-around, so expect charm rather than abandon. More of the latter would've been very welcome here. (MC)
(Human Audio)

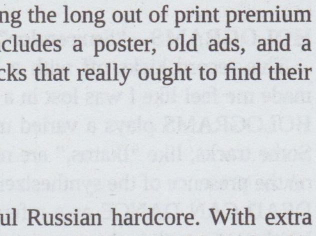
MORON'S MORONS – "Headless Eyes" EP

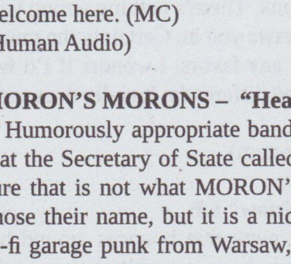
Humorously appropriate band name for a week when the US heard that the Secretary of State called the President a fucking moron. I am sure that is not what MORON'S MORONS had in mind when they chose their name, but it is a nice coincidence to me. This is thrashy, lo-fi garage punk from Warsaw, Poland. The music falls more on the rock side of the spectrum with guitar solos thrown into short songs, but the recording style gives it a rougher, more punk sound. The vocals are distorted, manic and buried in the mix. The drums pound away at a frantic pace. Not bad. (CK)
(No Front Teeth)

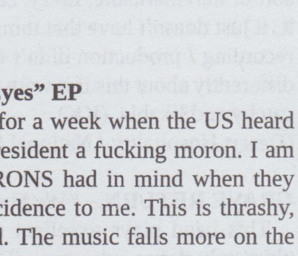
NAPALM RAID – "Wheel of War" LP

As anyone who has ever seen them live can attest, in person NAPALM RAID are one of the very best D-beat / Scandinavian-style hardcore bands. A well-oiled hardcore delivery machine. Their past records haven't ever really lived up to that legacy, but fortunately this one is a definite step in the right direction. The dense recording recalls

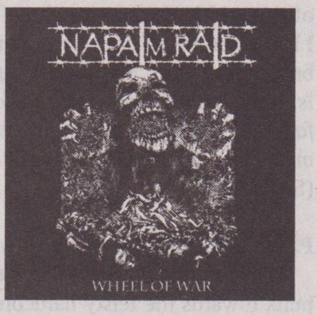








MARTIN SAVAGE GANG



later ANTI-CIMEX, as do the thick, bleak vocals and the slight hint of metal in the riffing. This is the sound of an older, more mature, more road-tested band, drawing on their experience to scream doom to the world. This is a fucking dark record—even the solos sound more like elegies than celebrations. By far the best NAPALM RAID record and one of the best of the year in the style. (AU)
(Rust And Machine)

NASTI – "Big Achievements" LP

NASTI's freaky hardcore is the aural equivalent in every way of all of those overheated and humid shows that you've been to. Heavily atmospheric and effects laden in a way that both obscures and intensifies their sound, NASTI pummels you and nauseates you and overwhelms you. The one breath of fresh air on this asphyxiating record is ironically the noisy dirge of "Stale," with whirling dissonant noise that summons the spirit of NO TREND at their filthiest. You'll need to wring the sweat out of your shirt once the record ends. Not for the faint at heart or for any hippie punks on LSD. (JD)
(Iron Lung)

THE NORMALS – "Demented Breakdown" EP

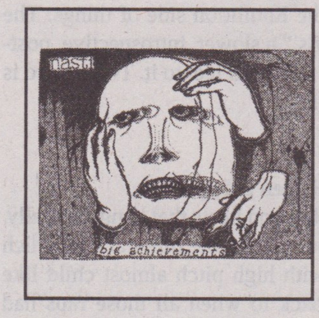
Three bangin' tunes on vinyl for the first time (recorded in '78) from one of NOLA's greatest. "Demented Breakdown" has the licks and swagger, "Sex & Violence" skips the frills, and "No Cigars" achieves instant earworm status. The tracks are raw and loose production-wise compared to their classic and collectible "Almost Ready / Hardcore" 45, but benefit from equally memorable pop hooks and slimy rock attitude. No need to think twice about this one. (MA)
(Last Laugh)

NO SKIN – "Paying the Fine" LP

Absolutely raging basement hardcore that sounds and feels distinctly upper Midwestern. Ben from IN DEFENCE is back on the mic and more pissed than ever, and is backed up by a band who clearly know how to match the rage with frantic, crucial riffs that I mostly haven't heard before, which is further emphasized by the nice dirty prominent bass and a drummer that adds plenty of cool fills and hits hard the rest of the time. No matter what stupid trends come in go in the greater hardcore scene, I rest easy knowing that bands like this and the pits they inspire will exist until the end. (DG)
(Give Praise)

NO USE FOR A NAME – "Justified Black Eye / Sidewalk"

Not to get all sappy but NO USE FOR A NAME used to be one of my favorite bands when I was growing up. My heart broke into little pieces five years ago when I heard that Tony Sly died. Listening to them since then has been kind of an emotional challenge. This is Fat Wreck's fourth release of its original demos series. Side A is the 1994 demo version of "Justified Black Eye" from the 1995 album *Leche Con Carne* and the B-side has the demo version of "Sidewalk" that came out on *Making Friends,* arguably two of the band's best albums. Hearing Tony's voice on these songs gives me chills. For those who don't know NO USE FOR



No SKIN
PAYING THE FINE LP

A NAME, this band wrote some of the best songs that ever came out on Fat. Those vocal harmonies on "Sidewalk"...These dudes have that shit down! If you've ever been a fan, don't miss out on this. (DB)
(Fat Wreck)

OBLEEKS – LP

A note with this album proudly proclaimed that it was produced by Amos from TENEMENT. It might as well have been a warning label. Whereas the producer's band sounds like songs where EVERCLEAR decided to not even try, this is somehow even more unlistenable. They self-describe as power pop, but it really should be categorized in its own genre of "bands who sound like pretentious college freshman who won't shut the fuck up about PAVEMENT while not being able to mimic any of the talent of that band." (RH)
(Good Land)

OBNOX – "Murder Radio" LP

The second LP of the year by Lamont Thomas' OBNOX is a thick and fuzzed out affair. If you found the crisp drums and stronger hip hop influence of *Niggative Approach* not really your style, and wanted something more fucked and garage, this is the record for you. By pulling in elements of hip hop and garage, laying endless spaced out guitar solos over every track, and injecting throbbing, ominous synths, *Murder Radio* is a killer modern psych record. B-side is all long jams with vocals that almost sound like they're played at the wrong speed. Smoke weed. (LP)
(Ever/Never)

'O' LEVEL - "The Malcolm" EP

This is a treat. I'd only ever heard the title track as one of the standout tracks on one of the greatest comps of all time (*Messthetics*) and to be able to hear this EP in it's entirety is so unexpected. You rarely ever get to listen to such a classic document from an explosive period of UK DIY. I can only imagine listening to this without the context of all the DESPERATE BICYCLES records and their sibling bands. I'm surprised by how catchy and dynamic this whole thing is. The straightforward clean guitar riffs form the structural foundation of the songs while the bass does slick runs underneath it all without overdoing it or being gratuitous. The drums snap and the vocals are great. This is a gem. If you've never heard this in it's entirety before, it's a time capsule that's well worth the cost of admission and one of those records you relish getting to experience in it's entirety for the first time. (P$)
(Breakout)

OPEN CITY – "Ten Contemporary Hymns" LP

Supergroup? Sort of. Members of WORRIERS, LIFETIME, KID DYNAMITE, Ted Leo's band, and so on play high energy, melodic hardcore / post-hardcore that sounds very '90s. It tends to walk a pretty fine line between sounding like something that would have been on Trustkill and something that would have been on Ebullition. Musically, most of the songs are up-tempo rippers that almost fall into a New York hardcore thing with chugging breakdowns and all, but then those same songs will also sound like they stole a part straight from TORCHES TO

ROME. Lyrically, this is luckily on the Ebullition side of things. The best song on here might be "Black Veils," a slower, introspective, post-hardcore number that has a early '90s Dischord feel to it. This record is a grower. Give it a couple of listens. (PA)
(self-released)

PALPOM – "Like Pulling Teeth / Huden Släpper"

Punk-synthwave with some dark vibes and beats that bang...literally. The bass synth hits. There is a standout part on the title track in which there is a call and response chorus with high pitch almost child like vocals, which is a welcomed throwback to when all those raps had the sped up samples in the early 2000s. This wouldn't work if they let up on the gas, but with the agitation underneath it works really well. Sounds like a pitch shifted chorus effect done right. Imagine members of HENRY FIAT'S OPEN SORE copying the sound of a NERVOUS GENDER record being played on a sped up turntable. Almost like this happened as a result of a speed epidemic amongst the punker members of the Ralph records crew but we didn't get to hear it until now. (P$)
(self-released)

PAMPLEMOUSSE – CD

If mystery is what PAMPLEMOUSSE was going for they achieved it as there is no information on this CD's sleeve. The band name and song titles are printed on the CD, but it is fuzzy, light grey text on a darker grey photo so it's no too easy to read. The music has an '80s college rock feel, with the aesthetic of bands like MISSION OF BURMA and the FEELIES, but I wouldn't say they sound like either. It's top notch musicianship playing catchy, intricate rock tunes. They are off on their own musical journey and I am happy to go along for the ride. (CK)
(self-released)

PINE HILL HAINTS – "Smoke" LP

If you have ever been a fan of any modern acoustic punk, vintage country tinged jams, or any hillbilly-infused underground rock, then you are probably quite familiar with Jamie and his HAINTS. If you are a fan, like I am, of his spooky jug band, this record will not disappoint. Jamie's almost perfect peckerwood horrorpunk crooning over skiffled out zydeco meshed with jazz punk blues sideswiping a New Orleans funeral is fucking crucial. I can also tell you from years of traveling with, and playing in many versions of this band, that you are not getting some hip, hillbilly reenactment. This is straight up, although decades too late, Lomax fuel from Middle-o'-Nowhere, Alabama. As their roster can vary drastically from one record to the next, it's hard to tell where each record will stand. This week's record is pretty tight! The fiddle playing and harmonica is ridiculously good, the jazzy horns are classy, and the reverb has been turned down a notch. While this isn't the rager, or basement stomper you are used to from the band, it's still a killer collection of songs, just maybe a little more mellow than usual. (DZ)
(Arkam)

PISS – "Stuck in the Gutter" EP

Rather than convince you in my own words of the brutish quality of the maddeningly misanthropic raw punk on PISS's second single, I have rearranged lines from their lyrics into a poem to best reveal the band's aesthetic. "*My brain is a fuck / Eat junk from the trash / People is junk / The vultures are already waiting for me / Warshit / I fall on my face / A constant victim of my attitude / Puke mixed with blood / Push me down I will swallow / Warshit.*" Gimme an English degree. (JD)
(Static Age)

P.R.O.B.L.E.M.S. – "Doomtown Shakes" LP

Long running Portland sleaze that has consistently steered their glam punk towards the feisty hardcore end of the spectrum—I suppose it's gonna be hard to keep DETESTATION and SEVERED HEAD OF STATE members in line, even if your approach is as much JOHNNY THUNDERS as SPAZM 151. Gratuitous leads sneak into almost every song, and those afraid of beer soaked rock'n'roll will should certainly proceed with caution (the title track is straight GEORGIA SATELLITES), though there is more than enough raging high-energy hardcore to win over all but the most stodgy punk purists. The closer is the banger to these ears, even though it's perhaps the most mellow track on the record...like a cool down after 30-plus minutes of relentless riffs, ripping leads, and vicious snarls.
(Doomtown Sounds / Rockstar)

PROM NITE – "Dancing To This Beat" LP

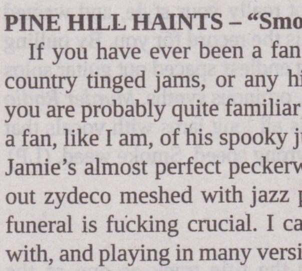
Truly love this cavalcade of radness. Classic snotty punk that has echoes of Los Angeles / San Pedro / Long Beach punker style (SIN 34 / RED CROSS bubble pop snot?!) but is truly present in today's punk reality...This wouldn't be out of place on a Lumpy Records comp or a Thrasher *Skate Rock* cassette. Cool anti-patriarchal / anti-consumer culture lyrics that are pointed and hilarious and true, but this sounds like a good time rather than a dreary lecture. Like your cool older skater sister making fun of you for being a boring square with small tame dreams. Insurgent hilarity, dark but radical humor over wild ecstatic guitars that feel like tripped out classic-era CIRCLE JERKS but with the addition of cool female players transforming the boring bro-scape punk reality. (LG)
(Barfbag)

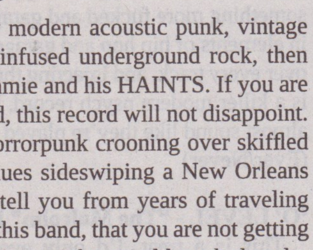
RASHŌMON – "Demo 2017" EP

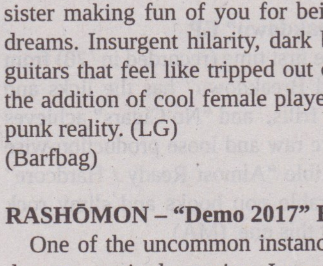
One of the uncommon instances where a band's demo tape totally deserves a vinyl pressing. I was floored when RASHŌMON's demo came out earlier this year; it is one of very few recent punk recordings to have proper riffs without descending into metalcore bullshit. Proof that technical prowess and punk can go hand in hand! Each of the four tracks on this demo are diverse in their construction without sacrificing any intensity. Utterly vital DCHC. When's the next record coming out? I'm chomping at the bit in anticipation. (JD)
(Society Bleeds)

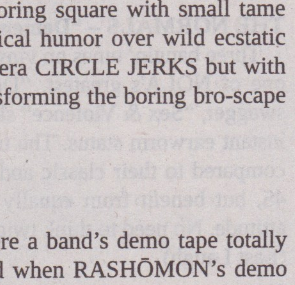
RC BOYS – "Rad Conspiracy" EP

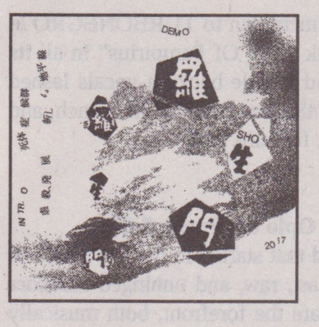
Formed in 1979, RC Boys were possibly Sacramento's first "hardcore" band, and featured members who went on to play in the

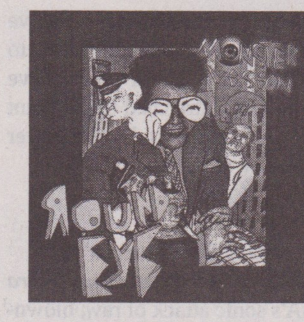












RUBBER MATE
CHA BOI
HOG TIE

SQUARE COOLS and the almighty TALES OF TERROR. This EP is a live recording from 1980 that was recorded on a portable tape recorder. The first two tracks are stylistically reminiscent of many of the California punk bands of the same era (think the ADOLESCENTS) and in some moments I am reminded of the earlier recordings of the PROLETARIAT. Clean guitar tone, a rhythmic mid-tempo pace and a stripped down approach to songwriting. The third track "CIA" is on the longer and slower side, transforming into a repetitive jam session of a song. This EP includes a fold-out poster that includes photos and an interview with the RC BOYS along with a very DIY record sleeve. As far as the songs are concerned, there was nothing here that was totally memorable but I do greatly appreciate this EP as a document of the early years of the Sacramento and California hardcore punk scenes. This EP is definitely a labor of love and worth checking out for those who enjoy digging through the obscure histories of California punk. (BP)
(Sacramento)

REPROACHER – "NATURE'S BASTARD" LP

This sounds like a stargazing funeral procession. The vocals are gnashing and snarling and remind me of MISERY INDEX. The music is dissonant, ominous, and tribal, reverberating with poetic meter. Lyrical content is filled with disappointment in society and metaphors about the unforgivingness and uncontrollable forces of nature. REPROACHER hail from Wyoming, which I have visited once and if those mountains and tundras spoke dismal hardcore metal to me it would probably sound much like this. As urgent as that endless horizon. (JR)
(Crown & Throne)

REPTOIDES – "Nueva Especie" EP

Santa Catarina, Mexico's REPTOIDES blasts out six hits of raw, lo-fi, low budget, ugly hardcore with a vocal delay that drags every line out further than it ever needs to go. Sometimes, it's a little too much, but REPTOIDES have the energy to get me looking past that. The last song starts to fall apart so beautifully that I can't even explain it. The sound of pure frustration. (GH)
(Grabaciones Puro Pedo / World Gone Mad)

ROUND EYE – "Monster Vision" LP

This is a confounding record. Shanghai, China's ROUND EYE brings you a varied and eclectic LP of rock, ROCKET FROM THE CRYPT-style sax-punk freakouts, and jazzy moments that gel well as an overall LP—but then there's the confounding parts. Joe Bob Briggs "narrates" the LP. That means, he juts in every few minutes, talking over the same hokey music to introduce himself (over and over), blabber on about absolutely nothing, or tell a sexist joke. Why? It breaks up the flow of the record and it just sucks. Also, there is a gatefold cover art depicting Trump with an SS button on his lapel standing by a confederate flag with no context. There are no real anti-Trump songs on here. We already know Trump is a nazi sympathizer. Do you have anything to say about that? (Some research led me to discover that the music video for their song "Billy" does have something to say about that.) Outside of these things, ROUND EYE writes good, engaging, spirited music that has nothing but pure energy pushing each song forward. Along with the aforementioned comparisons, they have a BUZZCOCKS-style knack for good hooks but also go out on some jazzy musical limbs that will have you guessing. Overall, the music is really good, but they need to trim down the frivolous shit. (GH)
(Sudden Death)

RUBBER MATE – "Cha Boi / Hog Tie"

I hate how "Cha Boi" starts, I hate what it's called, and I hate how it sounds: human dirt ground into the grooves, a vinyl beer-shit. "Hog Tie," all three seconds of it, is pummel and slither incarnate. Very nearly the sort of dream-come-true genius that gets me overly excited and results in me hurting one of my old-man body parts. Kill me now, I can say I've lived thanks to "Hog Tie." Impossible to play just once. Dangerously ugly. Very nice. (MC)
(Total Punk)

RUTSA – "Rauha Ja Taspaino" EP

Here's one is for all you filthy, disgusting crust freaks out there. This Finnish band serves up a heaping dose of dirty rotten sludge, with stinking raw black metal oozing all over it. They keep it real loose too, like the whole thing could fall apart at any moment. It's like coming across a festering corpse on a hot summer day. Not for the faint of heart! (BA)
(Kumiversal / Rämekuukkeli)

2nd CLASS SUBSTITUTES – "Among Apes" 10"

This band sounds like they would probably play the Fest in Florida. 2nd CLASS SUBSTITUTES is from Vienna, Austria and this is their third release, having put out an EP and a demo before releasing this 10". The Fat Wreck influence on this album is heavy, no pun intended. Reminds me of NOFX and MILLENCOLIN. If you're into clean and melodic skate pun, you'll probably dig this album. (DB)
(Sleepwalk / True Trash)

SHAGG – LP

An interesting record whose sound is characterized by the band using a scuzzy, saturated bass sound with no guitar, subdued but soulful vocals, and songs that exist on the danceable side of depressive. I could see this band hypothetically existing in Olympia in the '80s or '90s, though not fitting with the Krowd. The record starts on a poppier note before shifting into an upbeat but dreary gear with some first and second LP WIPERS influence seeping into the bass riffing and drumming (confirmed by their cover of "Return of the Rat" that is OK but unfortunately botches the main riff). Things get dirgey for a song, before ending on a shuffle-beat. If you like that STREET EATERS are a bass and drums only band, and you like bands with free-form creativity, SHAGG are worth checking out. (DG)
(Greenway / Quality Time)

SICK HORSE – "Good Body Feeling" LP

Moderne punque a la Berlin: everything at once, nothing at all. Bleak in mood, yes, but the sound is lite darkness, urban drug wave, all-

nighter aggro moping. Not adventurous or even "smart," but effective in scratching the common itch for post-informed punking, akin to TOTAL CONTROL and the ilk. Odd moments of guitar power have me seein' blood, but SICK HORSE is best when stretched to the point of snapping (see "Tame"). It seemed too neat at the start, but the power increased toward the album's close. A grower. (MC)
(Static Age)

SISTEMA EN DECADENCIA – "Ganancias de la Guerra" EP

Goddamn, this EP is blistering and relentless. *Ganancias de la Guerra* continues SISTEMA EN DECADENCIA's sonic attack of raw, blown-out, and noisy-as-hell D-beat, featuring a ferocious and fast rhythm section, extremely distorted guitar tone, and agonized, pissed vocals. Bands such as ATROCIOUS MADNESS, ZYANOSE, and DISCLOSE come to mind. The tracks "Nada" and "Sistema en Decadencia" are my two favorites, with the latter delivering a change in pace that helps to keep things interesting. If you like your hardcore blown-out, pissed, and noisy, don't miss this! (BP)
(Hardcore Victim)

SLAUGHTER AND THE DOGS – "Tokyo Dogs" CD

This is a rocking live set from these first wave UK punk rock'n'rollers. A song list stacked with the early classics as well as some cool covers of the NEW YORK DOLLS and the VELVET UNDERGROUND. By today's standards this is more rock'n'roll than punk but the sound and production here is powerful and tight. This was recorded in 2016 and is dedicated to the drummer Noel Kay who has since passed away. (RL)
(Cleopatra)

STARTER JACKETS – "Preferred Stock" EP

God I hate fucking power pop! It's the kind of shit that makes people think TOM PETTY is punk. Sorry. Too soon? Eat me. This little gem of a dayglo masterpiece is packaged in the worst kind of Miami Vice artwork, complete with vomit inducing pink and green splatter vinyl. Kill me. You like the RASPBERRIES? The ROMANTICS? Then you deserve every track of this mailed to you in a steaming bag of feces (RO)
(Brassneck / It's Alive / Waterslide)

TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET – "Goin' Back To Wyo / Walking The Yard"

Released at the same time as their new covers album, *Stealing The Covers*, this single is a little taster to ensure all their fans that TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET is working on new things. Even though they sound like the old things, they're still new things! "Going Back To Wyo" is an ode to the band's home state, with a few local references to get a nice pop out of their fans from the beginning. "Walking The Yard" is standard fare for the group, a straightforward pop punk "I'll break out of prison to show you I love you" ditty. (RH)
(Fat Wreck)

TROUZ AN NOZ – "Miz Du" CD

Latest full length effort from this Breton punk rock outfit. Using guitars, synths, violin, and male and female vocals, they stitch together a phenomenally rocking sound very much akin to TURBONEGRO at their *Apocalypse Dudes* heights. Think "Age Of Pampirius" in all its bombastic glory, just with a violin and female backing vocals lashed into the mix. So far as I can ascertain, the words are all in French, and Breton. Symphonic punk at it's finest, for sure. (RK)
(General Strike / La Distroy

TXÄKOLY CONFLICT – "Futbol: Opio del Pueblo" EP

TXÄKOLY CONFLICT was a band that started in the late 1980s in Bilbao, Basque Country. This EP is fast, raw, and unhinged hardcore punk. Energy, anger and authenticity are the forefront, both musically and lyrically. The furious hardcore blasts are interwoven with political samples to create a bleak and chaotic ambiance. The intensity and ferocity of this EP brings bands like MG-15, KAGADA DE PERRO, HHH, and MASSACRE 68 to mind. The politically charged lyrics address such issues as consumerism, nationalism and soccer. The two friends who comprised TXÄKOLY CONFLICT, Gorka and Javier, were brought together by their love of punk, hardcore and DIY philosophy. This EP of recordings was done in the mid 1990s and was recorded together by them with only a guitar, bass, and drum machine. In the last two years, Gorka and Javier have both passed away and this release was an effort by several close friends to finish an unfinished project. Needless to say, the care and love that went into this shows. The record includes a 45-page booklet with photos, interviews, fliers, comics, and more. A super interesting and informative read. As an EP of a great punk band, as a document of Basque punk, and as a labor of love and demonstration of friendship, I highly suggest checking out this record. (BP)
(Antirepresivo Punk / MRHC)

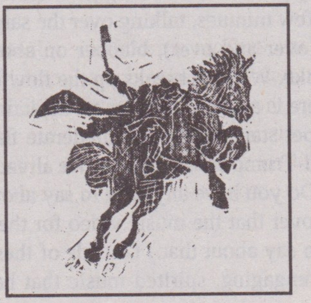
U-BOATS – "Streets Of Today" CD

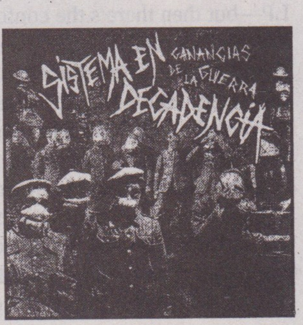
This Florida band was around in the early '80s. Their early records (two singles and an LP) were pretty much hardcore similar to BAD RELIGION circa their first LP. This is a recording from the mid-'80s. It's not hardcore, but punk with college rock tendencies, which is understandable considering the direction of '80s US punk at the time. So this sounds like CHANNEL THREE and AGENT ORANGE on their third LPS, only sloppier. The guitar has that delayed effect of the CULT'S "She Sells Sanctuary" at times. This is good for '80s US punk completists. A CD reissue of their second LP, this is by no means essential but not a throwaway either. (RL)
(self-released)

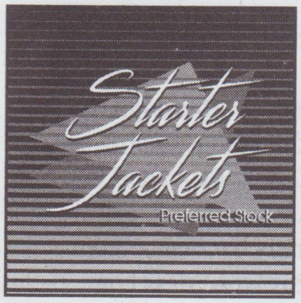
THE UNRELEASABLES – "Music For No Brainers" EP

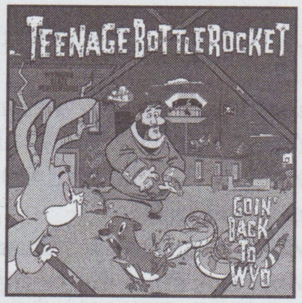
This is the fourth release from this UK bratty trash rock band. If you like the OKMONICS, SNEAKY PINKS, DAMNED, DRAGS, VOM, etc. you won't be disappointed with this little gem of punk rock gutter scuzz. Does not let up for a minute. "Life Of Trouble" is the hit for sure but all slay with equal fervor. It comes in two different snappy covers as well. (RO)
(Creature Of The Night)

RUTSA
rauha ja tasapaino









UP FOR NOTHING – "Swindled" LP

Killer from second number one! UP FOR NOTHING are the kind of fast, melodic punk that works for every occasion (if you're a '90s punk in the key of Fat fan). Reading? Walking? Marching? Partying in the out of doors? Make this your soundtrack and you're going to feel better about the shit going on in your life. Check out "Born At The End Of Summer" and "Don't Wanna Know" for two great examples this LP's greatness. It's a real shame that this band broke up fairly quickly after releasing this album, but I'm hopeful of great things coming from the ashes. COVER YOUR IDOLS (featuring the singer) at least is a nice sign that there's still some musical activity there. (RH)
(It's Alive)

VIAGRA BOYS – "Call of the Wild" 12"

Throbbing ominous synth punk from the school of self-abasement. This is lyrically similar to some of the bands on Total Punk, particularly PERVERTS AGAIN. Musically, each song is just a pounding beat with a drone bassline and some weirdo getting hysterical about stealing teeth or getting transformed into a chair. There's also a lot of synth loops, some minimal guitar, and one wacky sax solo. But mostly it's just that bass, drums, and weird dude rambling. This is by far the best modern no-wave or no-wave-adjacent record I have ever heard. (LP)
(Push My Buttons)

THE VIBRATORS – "Restless" CD

This is a three song CD EP from this old school UK punk band. The band on this is the best version that tours here, including original long time drummer Eddie, Pete on bass and lead vocals, and Nigel, also of the MEMBERS fame, on guitar. Although frontman Knox is mostly absent in the touring lineup, he does sing on the last track here, a slow version of the ELVIS PRESLEY hit "Hound Dog." Good stuff and a good live band too. (RL)
(Die Laughing)

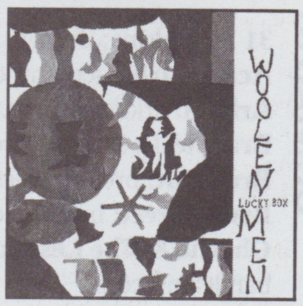
WEEKEND DADS – "September Downs" EP

Pretty fucking tolerable three chord pop punk from Nova Scotia. Sounds at times influenced by the better, drunken years of Plan-It-X, a little Fat, and there's some definite D4 worship going on. It's only slightly cheezy, it's anthemic, and like I said, pretty tolerable for pop punk. I'd check these hosers out if I got the chance! (DZ)
(It's Alive)

WOOLEN MEN – "Lucky Box" LP

This LP comprises a collection of tracks from various tape releases from these Portland post-punk stalwarts. Alongside a scratchy, sprawling FALL cover that sounds like the CLEAN and a NEO BOYS song, you get nine original compositions of simplistic yet doleful pop tuneage that wouldn't be out of place on the Rough Trade or Flying Nun rosters, or perhaps a *Messthetics* comp. Best thing I've heard all month. (AM)
(Dog's Table / See My Friends)

FUTBOL
TXAKOLY CONFLICT
OPIO DEL PUEBLO



WOOLLY BUSHMEN – "Arduino" LP

The debut album from this Florida rockabilly band. It's heavy on the country stylings with drawled out vocals, crooning, and sincerity. The music is well-played and produced, but it is missing some kind of edge to set it apart from the crowd. (CK)
(Pig Baby)

ZELLOTS – "On The Dole" Flexi

Ooh, a flexi! I thought I knew a lot about old Canadian punk, but I never heard of this all-girl four-piece, the ZELLOTS! Looking at the collage style foldout / band history insert, maybe if I'd seen more Canadian punk fliers, I'd recognize them—they played in the late '70s with all the greats, K-TELS, DOA, SUBHUMANS, MODERNETTES! They managed to get three rough takes onto tape in 1979. The sound is pretty overblown lo-fi, but their brilliance manages to shine through. For those counting, this is some of the best female-fronted / 1970s punk rock I've heard, up there with AVENGERS and NZ's SUBURBAN REPTILES. Check it out! (GB)
(Supreme Echo)

VARIOUS – "Bloodstains Across Virginia" LP

When I think of '70s punk rock, Virginia isn't the first state I think of. These clever compilers have this old timer impressed, filling out two full sides of Virginia based punk rawk, with many familiar faces and a few stump the chump style mystery punkers: have you heard of INSINUATIONS or RICKY AND THE WHITE BOYS?! Some other highlights are ZITS, PREVARICATORS, CHUMPS, and a couple tracks from the elusive *No Room To Dance* compilation, including the killer "Janie Has a Black Eye" from female-fronted CITIZEN 23. Glad to see the spigot remains untapped for compilations like this. (GB)
(Prompt Critic)

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Desert Hospitality: dhrc.bigcartel.com
Die Laughing: dielaughingrecords.com
Diva Cup: divacupclevo.bandcamp.com
Dig!: digrecords.bigcartel.com
Dirt Cult: dirtcultrecords.com
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Hostage: P.O. Box 5401, Huntington Beach, CA 92646; hostagerecords.com
Human Audio: Övre Bergsv. 21,126 34 Hägersten, SWEDEN
Incognito: incognitorecords.de
Iron Lung: ironlung.bigcartel.com
It's Alive: 11411 Hewes St, Orange, CA 92869, itsaliverecords.com
JanML: janmlrecords.bigcartel.com
Kite: kiterecordings.com
Last Laugh: 135 Huntington Street, Brooklyn NY 11231
Loony Tunes: 69 Wykeham Street, Scarborough, N. Yorks Y012 7SA, ENGLAND, loonytunesrecords.co.uk
Maloka: BP 536, 21014 Dijon Cedex, FRANCE, malokadistro.com
Marderschaden: marderschadendiy.bandcamp.com
Muerte A Tipo: muerteatipodiscos.wordpress.com, muerteatipo@hotmail.com
National Southwestern: 11thstreetrecords.com
No Front Teeth: PO Box 27070, London N2 9ZP, ENGLAND, nofrontteeth.co.uk
Numero Group: 2533-35 South Troy, Chicago IL 60623, numerogroup.com
Open City: theopencity.bandcamp.com
Pig Baby: pigbabyrecords.com
Pillage: (304) 613-6617
Polar Summer: vk.com/polarxsummer
Prom Nite: realrockers.bandcamp.com
Push My Buttons: pushmybuttons.se
Quality TIme: qualitytimerecords.bandcamp.com
Rämekuukkeli-Levyt: ramekuukkeli.nettisivu.org
Rockstar: rockstarrecords.de
Rudy's Back: rudysback.lautre.net
Rust and Machine: rustandmachine.storenvy.com
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Society Bleeds: chimichanga.storenvy.com
SPHC: sphc.bigcartel.com
Static Age: Burknerstrasse 6, U-Bhf. Schonleinstrasse 12047 Berlin GERMANY, snusmestere@web.de, staticshockmusik.com
Sudden Death: Suddendeath.com
Supreme Echo: 2504 Government St. #102, Victoria, BC V8T4P7, CANADA, supremeecho.com
TKO: tkorecords.com
Total Punk: floridasdying.com
Trouz An Noz: acebook.com/trouzannoz/
True Trash: truetrash.com
Txäkoly Conflict: txakolyconflict.bandcamp.com
Tsuguri: tsugurirecords.blogspot.com
U-Boats: u-boatsamerica.com
Unreleasables: theunreleasables.bandcamp.com
Wahn Fried: wahnfriedrecords.blogspot.com, gedresche@yahoo.de
Waterslide: waterslidercords.com
What's For Breakfast: wfbrecords.com
World Gone Mad: worldgonemad.bigcartel.com

DEMOS

All cassettes and CD-Rs are reviewed in this section. Send yours to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA and include your contact information. Submissions without artwork will not be considered.

(AT) Alex Turner
(GH) Greg Harvester
(KS) Kenn Suto
(MB) Matt Badenhop
(MD) Michael de Toffoli
(WN) Robert Collins

ANTI-CITIZEN – This is a two song tape from a band I'd describe as solidly peace punk. It's the kind of stuff you'd pogo to in a basement and have a ball. I was originally drawn in by the cover of a spiky punk hefting a brick through a window. Can't go wrong with that, and can't argue with the sticker message: "Peace should be more than the time between wars." (KS) (2-song cassette, lyrics not included, anticitizenpunk.bandcamp.com)

ASS LIFE – *A Couple Cold Ones* – Los Angeles's ASS LIFE writhes between thrash and throw-down breakdowns that inspire creepy crawls and chest beating. Screamed, pained vocals map out their dilemmas: getting trashed, feeling like shit, murder, self-hate, thinking with your dick, and going to work. Okay. (GH) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, asslife.bandcamp.com)

AWFUL MAN / LIFE HACKS – *Can We Unlearn The American Dream? / Complaint Rock* – Split tape from two different bands that are basically the same members. AWFUL MAN called it quits and never got to release this last batch of songs, and the remaining members are in LIFE HACKS. Classically hilarious song titles from Jeff Poot ("What It's Like to be Cold More Often Than Not," "Born in the USB," "Last Call and Testament") and songwriting to match. More along the lines of WITCHES WITH DICKS than BRAIN KILLER. Are you like me, someone who loves the right pop punk but ashamed to say that you like pop punk? This is the good shit. Biting, clever, and fun with a sad song about a dear friend gone too soon. If you've been paying attention to LIFE HACKS, you should know who these kids are. (AT) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included, jeffpootsemailaddress@gmail.com, lifehacksbostonpunk.bandcamp.com)

THE BAD MAN – I know that everyone out there is trying to use a sax these days but the BAD MAN is here to tell you that it can still be used as an oppressive force of bad rock'n'roll. Standard rock / boogie / blues riffs here fronted by a spirited front guy. That is a strength here but not enough to keep me entertained. (GH) (9-song CD-R, lyrics not included, thebadman@gmail.com)

BARBED WIRE BRACES – Gruff and mid-paced Oi! / street punk with pretty standard riffing and anthemic choruses. I feel like this is the classic bar rock version of punk, like LED ZEP bands were to our parents' generation... not a criticism, just an observation. "Imminent Attack" is the best number to my ears. (WN) (11-song CD-R, lyrics not included, bardbedwirebraces.ca)

BILLS ACCOUNTANT – Lo-fi, loosely articulated bedroom jangle and light noise with a financial theme. It feels like a stream of consciousness style flow, rather than a fully realized release. (GH) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included, billsaccountant.bandcamp.com)

BLOODY SHOW – *Let America Pay* – This tape has a money print background with a fucked up Statue of Liberty on the front and "Fuck The Police" right on the inside. I was thinking it might be something kinda like LEFTÖVER CRACK but instead it has more of a rock'n'roll, artsy, and visceral type of nihilism to it than crusties can muster. Overall, BLOODY SHOW made me think of IGGY POP and the GOSSIP smooshed together with washed out megaphone vocals. My favorite lyrics include *"Remember remember remember, it's nine eleven forever"* on "911EVR.". It's also awesome that this tape samples SUN RA and DICK GREGORY. A rockin', head banging, smart Columbus, OH band. (KS) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, bloodyshow.bandcamp.com)

BROCCOLI – *Home* – I had never heard of this band when I picked this tape up, but then when I figured out it's a reissue of a record from 1998 I didn't feel so foolish. Then I listened to it and felt foolish I'd never heard of them before. BROCCOLI has a terrible name, but this record is absolutely great. They had that '90s emo punk urgency, a sound reminiscent of SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE, JAWBREAKER, and LEATHERFACE, with some roots in SONIC YOUTH. This tape got my housemates to walk into my room and say "hey this is really good, what band is this?" I can't think of a better endorsement. This album was out of print for a long while, so pick it up now that it's back. (KS) (10- song cassette, lyrics not included, deadbrokerecords.com)

K. CAMPBELL – *Pure Pop for Jaded Punks* – Slick, upbeat and bouncy power pop from Houston with lyrics that about being awkward, having crushes, and other love related topics. There's some parts ELVIS COSTELLO, some parts twee, and something like a sped up DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE here. Regardless of what you think of that description, this band practices hard and I can see them getting big in certain crowds. The title of the tape is appropriate for the material. (KS) (12-song cassette, lyrics included, poisonmoonrecords.com)

COMPASSION FATIGUE – On the music: blown out, feisty and very pissed sounding hardcore punk with a distinct but difficult to pinpoint Midwest vibe. A couple of tracks (especially the fourth) are legit burners, and the guitar tone / style here is freaky and wild. On the name: are you really overwhelmed with caregiving and support for people in your communities, or are you trying to be edgy by taking a stab at those who encourage you to do so? Lyrics would help us clarify your intent and / or position. #mysterious (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, compassionfatigue.bandcamp.com)

THE COMPLETERS – *"Silence / Be Gone"* – If you're going to spend the time and resources to release a two fukkn song cassette, then the two songs better be as good as these. Devastatingly on point aggressive dark punk / early alt rock from Porto Alegre, Brazil, the COMPLETERS deliver one absolute classic ("Be Gone") and one really good song ("Silence") that absolutely take me back to another time. Crisp, concise, urgent tracks that command attention; easily one of the best this month. "*Ticking is the time going by, silence was the way we meant goodbye.*" (WN) (2-song cassette, lyrics included, thecompleters.bandcamp.com, PO Box 163, Porto Alegre, RS 90001-970 BRAZIL)

CROSS CUT SORES – *Raunch Date* – Fuzzed freak duo delivers stripped down garage / blues / punk that sounds so fucked that it comes off as damaged psychedelia. My first impression was BLUES EXPLOSION, but CROSSCUT SORES are light years weirder than that initial take suggests...this is from fuckin' space, and it's shit hot like fire. Weird fire. (WN) (15-song CD-R, lyrics not included, tim@amusiacs.com, crosscutsores.bandcamp.com)

CRUTCH / PAVEL CHEKOV – *split* – CRUTCH is from Oklahoma City and PAVEL CHEKOV is from Dallas. Grindcore? Powerviolence? Fastcore? PAVEL CHEKOV does six songs in just about as many minutes (with the longest breaking a minute and a half) and CRUTCH does five songs in just over six minutes. It's a blistering twelve minutes. I like seeing bands like this, but have never been much of a fan of the recordings. It sounds good and is well recorded, but nothing really sticks out or stays with me. Kind of like knowing you ate, but you can't remember what it tasted like. (AT) (11-song cassette, lyrics included, crutchtheband.bandcamp.com, pavelchekov.bandcamp.com)

DEIMOS CULT – *(Cult)* – The fuck? I've never heard of this San Francisco band (I need to get out more). Truly beautiful mutant slogs dominate a demo that starts with the most compelling robotic lurch I have heard in ages (to be fair, my exposure to robot lurches is somewhat limited). From weirdo grunge / sludge on that opener and then the ridiculous freestyle / Italo disco intro into the off the rails wild style banger that follows—a song with the simplest, killerest, most unexpected squirmy stomp breakdown you'll hear in 2017. A ripping hardcore demo that refuses to accept classification as simply "a hardcore demo," DEIMOS CULT are pushing boundaries in every direction. (WN) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, deimoscult.bandcamp.com)

DEQUANTIZE – Pleasant, a little KRAFTWERK-y, and somewhat adventure-dreamy feeling keyboard / synth-driven chiller music from a member of NOSFERATU It made me want to drive a submarine through an undersea wonderland. (KS) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, no contact info)

DISINFECTANT – The cover of the tape (hand cut construction paper collage of a disinfectant can spraying the earth in neon colors) had me thinking that this DC band was gonna be cuter or something. Instead this is blazing hardcore from the history pages of DC. A great recording for a demo, everything is crisp and clear—almost *too* clear for a demo. Like rolling into town and picking a random place for lunch and being surprised you found the place all the locals would have sent you. (AT) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, disinfectant.dc@gmail.com, disinfectant.bandcamp.com)

DISINFECTANT – *Sphinx* – A short follow up to the demo from last year, again with really nice handmade cover art. Songs about being dissatisfied about the world, reminding me of the crust I listened to in the early 2000s. But now everybody that plays / listens to this is a bit cleaned up and more together seeming and sounding, with a little less utter rage in the vocals (that you can now understand), and the occasional guitar solo that lasts longer than the length of a pick slide, plus a few more mosh parts than I prefer. Leaves me feeling a little old and out of touch, but I bet they blow the roof off the basements they play. (AT) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, disinfectant.dc@gmail.com, disinfectant.bandcamp.com)

EYE JAMMY – *Live at the BBQ* – Cool '80s sounding punk from Hattiesburg, MS featuring members of JUDY AND THE JERKS. It reminds me of a little of the jangliness and party feeling of BIG BOYS, even though I think they're maybe trying to go for a stab at MADBALL. Either way (and I hate saying this) it's got a good *vibe* and the songs are instantly memorable. Fun fucking punk with cool lyrics. (GH) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, eyejammy.bandcamp.com)

HATE FILLED KIDS – *Fuck Punk Rock Rip Pockets Snatch Jewels* – Extremely tongue-in-cheek, angry, drum machine punk from London with pretty fucking funny lyrics. Includes song topics like punks and their selfies, ACAC (all cops are cops), fuck grammar Nazi sympathy, and starting yet another band that sounds like DISCHARGE. Somehow, this is idiotic and smart at the same time. Perfect slooze for getting sloshed with your mates and takin' selfies all night. (GH) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, hatefilledkids.bandcamp.com)

HYENA – Cassette version of this full charge bombastic Spanish crust attack. Hints of the melody that permeated the early a'00s iteration/s of the (sub)genre, but HYENA rely on force and power more than nuance... though the end of "My Worst Enemy" does start to blur that line. It's hard charging and emotionally charged, the vocals convey an intensity that the rest of the outfit matches handsomely—and it's fuckin' heavy. Even when the band feels like they are struggling to break out of a cage, the power is never lost. And the sudden (subtle) switch to the steady driving beat in "Avanzamos Juntxs" is a total game changer. Thumbs up. (WN) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, hyenapunx@gmail.com, hyenacrust.bandcamp.com, pifia.records@gmail.com)

HYPER TENSIONS – Heavy dark vibes for a garage act that I don't really feel qualified to compartmentalize. So I won't. But I will say that the I listened to the whole tape twice before I typed a single word, and the aloof insistence of this band is instantly attractive; it's like they are just casually doing their thing and don't give two shits if you like it or not. Like the cute punk at the gig who won't even make eye contact even though you know they are looking. And even still, everything is lurking under a dark cloud and it all feels intentional. Goth garage meets WIPERS maybe? But regardless of the designation, the result here is superb. (WN) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, hypertensions.bandcamp.com, 1900 E. Division, Evansville, IN 47711)

THE INVESTMENT – *Empty Stations* – Nice darkwave / post punk from SF here. Pretty by-the-numbers, but great sounds and melodies from the bass and synth. That's the signature NEW MODEL ARMY bass tone right there! The vocals don't vary much and the songs drone a bit, but the vibe sustains and urges one to keep dancing. (MA) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, theinvestment.bandcamp.com)

ISOTOPE – *Wake Up Screaming* – Oakland's ISOTOPE offer up some energized hardcore punk, rollicking around with *Braveheart*-style yelled lyrics over relentless drums and thrashing guitars. Songs talk about "breaking out" and fighting back, and then there's a cover of ANTI-CIMEX. I've heard from reliable sources that this band is really fun live, and this tape would suggest it. (KS) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, isotopehardcore@gmail.com)

JUDY AND THE JERKS – *Alive at the Skatepark* – Yet another fun as shit tape from Hattiesburg's (MS) JUDY AND THE JERKS! I'm thinking this one is recorded live (?), hence the title, but the recording is really smooth and has a ton of energy. Most of the songs are previously released, but I think this is my favorite thing they've put out so far because the band sounds super tight, fast and raw. Incredibly fun, catchy punk with tons of hooks, plus a NEGATIVE APPROACH cover. Goofin' hard, yo. (GH) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, judyandthejerks.bandcamp.com)

KAIJU DAISENSO – *Radiation Scars* – Manic grind / violence meets emotive hardcore, all presented in a (Japanese) cinematically themed package. New York's KAIJU DAISENSO lean heavily on samples to set the mood and break up the monotony that plagues hardcore, and they start right out of the gate with the last half of "Kolaakian Enslavement" to make sure that you know what you are in for. Atmospheric overdubs punctuate driving intros before relentless blasts and stomps take over...brief excursions (explosions) between bouts of introspection. Though, to be honest, it might be the other way around. I recommend listening to "Oxygen Destroyer" at full volume every day for (at least) a week, even though the title track is the best creamer on this disc. (WN) (8-song CD-R, lyrics included, tokyofistrecords@gmail.com, kaijudaisenso.bandcamp.com)

LOW LIFE – *Die Now!* – Marginally (at best) uncompromising blastcore whose stated purpose is to "polarize the listener" (for once, a promo sheet that I can get behind). And with sub-90 second manic hardcore blasts and painfully drawn out filthy dirges, LOW LIFE achieve their goal. I admit that I don't like most of this demo (the track "Pigs" is a total creamer though—the fast part and especially the dirge that interrupts the middle of the song), per se, but I fully support their dedication to making disgusting music disgusting again, so mission accomplished. (WN) (13-song CD-R, lyrics not included, low_life717@comcast.net, Death13Records, 544 E Marion St., Lancaster, PA 17602)

MELANIN – *Not Your Target* – Damn, this is not what I expected and that is good! Raging, yet tempered punk that walks a line of melody, but has all the ferocity and energy of hardcore. The vocals are fierce and smart, but actually *sung* in a way where you can understand where the fuck they are coming from…so you can hear about the injustices of racism, nationalism, and how not much has fucking changed in this country in the last couple hundred years. There is also a cool radio mashup on side B. This is a welcome blast of informed intensity that I can't recommend enough. (GH) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, melaninpunk.bandcamp.com, melaninpunk@gmail.com)

MR. & THE MRS. – *Bumble-Buzz Bee-Fuzz* – Minimalist garage rock two piece from KCMO. Simple and driving songs with lots of reverb on the guitar, reminding me a bit of my favorite KCMO band NATURE BOYS. These songs seem like they come from the weed smoking rock and roll camp, as opposed to the whiskey and beer camp. While the drummer holds it all together the guitarist seems to enjoy all the room of not having a bass player. Thirteen-minute noodle jammer to close it out. Hometown heroes in their local dive bar, I'm sure. They've got a ton of releases, and this isn't a demo, it's an album. Get on it, there are only 50! (AT) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, spiderchildrecords.bandcamp.com/)

MYAKKA – *Good Boy* – Thundering raw punk dominated by hollow drums and reverbed-to-death vocals (on the A-side) and buzzsaw guitars (on the B-side). Appreciate the demo with two different (and different sounding) sessions, and fans of aggressive and in your face blown out hardcore will want to pay attention here. (WN) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, myakka.bandcamp.com)

NERVOUS TICK AND THE ZIPPER LIPS – Tough guy NY punk with gnarly, dirty guitars and snarling dirty vox, but with RAMONES surf-bop beats to make it bouncy and energetic. They even have keyboards to give it a SCREAMERS feel. It's brash but still accessible and enjoyable. I look forward to punk bands like this that musically doesn't take itself too seriously. Six songs that complement each other and share an up and down range but deserve to be heard in one breath. Just play the fuckin' thing. (MD) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, morepowertapes.bandcamp.com)

NEURA – *Selva Humana* – It took a few tracks to really compartmentalize the sounds going on here, but you've got neurotic (almost US '80s sounding) rough punk from the Spanish state. Not quite "hardcore" but harder than just punk, and snarling Spanish language vocals in the vein of classics like TNT, but less melodic. The whole thing is propelled by an awkward beat and presented in booming raw fidelity and it's really good...if you like punk. (WN) (9-song cassette, lyrics included, neurapunk@gmail.com, pifia.records@gmail.com, neurapunk.bandcamp.com)

PILL – *Aggressive Advertising* – An interesting mixture of punk and freeform jazz fusion—think scatterbrained saxophones blowing all over the place to really define the chaos, GANG OF FOUR rhythmic melodies getting noisy and aggressive in a breakdown, and vocals keeping the same scattered and emotional aesthetic by propelling between serenading and screaming. It's a really fun and enjoyable tape that drives serious rhythmic points deep into you. I really love how they burrow these simple but very to-the-point, powerful thoughts into the core of the song, putting lean phrases in context, and then repeating them until the repressed message is so apparent that it's almost life shattering. I wanted to really be present and actively listen to this tape, but I kept getting comfortable and zoning out with the music, so it took a few listens to really find all of it. I'm down to give it a few more. (MD) (7-song cassette, lyrics included, pill.bandcamp.com)

PRAYING – *Once More Without Feeling* – I like the moxie of a band that sends a backpatch with their tape. It really says "you're going to like this so much you'll want to brand yourself." Oakland's PRAYING have a heavy sludgy thing going on that rises and falls, and when they get into a real groove it's pretty darn easy to get that head nodding and light the spliff up. The instrumental portions hold a little higher, clearer tone that I hear on this type of music usually, and the vocals are washed out in this rhythmic, enchanting sort of way. I have had this tape on repeat, and after a few more listens I think I'll sew that patch on. (KS) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, praying.bandcamp.com)

R-TRONIKA – *Chica Dinamita* – Cumbia punk project by a Peruvian living in New York. Pretty light and loose in execution, but the compositions hold their weight. It sorta reminds me of the MANU CHAO stuff I've been exposed to, but with a more DIY and socio-political vibe (but still some partying to be had). This recording is very crisp and clear, but I'll bet the impact is much greater loud and live. (MA) (6-song CD-R, lyrics not included, r-tronika.bandcamp.com)

SALTY – *Preservation Blues* – A masterful blend of DEVO and JAY REATARD and with great tunes that supersede the comparisons. A couple of these tracks could fit nicely on *Bloodstains Across the Midwest*, say, between DOW JONES AND THE INDUSTRIALS and the HASKELS. Seriously y'all, this Kansas City group is fucking *hot*. This shit is gold. (MA) (9-song cassette, lyrics included, saltykcmo.bandcamp.com)

THE SEWER BUDDIES – *Gross Buffet / Butt Sick* – Sloppy and irreverent East Coast punk. Shrill female vox will seal or steal the deal for some, this reviewer thinks they add a nice bite to the relatively basic punk riffs delivered with an off kilter slop and biting guitars. Good job throwing in some weird(er) slow bits to keep things interesting, and I think the songs are all about food. (WN) (4-song CD-R, lyrics not included, thesewerbuddies.bandcamp.com)

SPUNK VOLCANO AND THE ERUPTIONS – *Not Wired Up Right* – Anthemic and unabashedly catchy UK punk. Not like UK82 and mohawks and stuff, but like the dirt biker punks hanging down the alley listening to MOTÖRHEAD and gobbing on the studded fashion princesses. I kinda don't like to admit that I like this as much as I do, but cheese aside, the shit is good. (WN) (11-song CD-R, lyrics not included, stutaylorpro@hotmail.com)

STIFF LOVE – *For the Whole Family* – Hip shaking, throwback style rock'n'roll out of Olympia, WA. The guitar sounds come in thick and a little raunchy on this tape, and the vocalist has an undeniable energy. My favorite song is "Up in Your Room," which starts with a real good guitar hook and holds you all along. Aesthetically this tape includes a real nicely done fold out poster designed to fit perfectly into the tape case. Very impressive. (KS) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, stifflove.bandcamp.com)

STRONG AS TEN – *Fifteen Strong Covers* – Long running French fastcore rippers giving respect. SPAZZ, CROSSED OUT, REPULSION, HOLIER THAN THOU?, BIG BOYS, REAGAN YOUTH, BLACK FLAG, DRI, DROP DEAD, and six more get the treatment here, all delivered with high end vocals and relentless thrash fury. (WN) (15-song cassette, lyrics not included, strong.as.ten.free.fr)

SUPER THIEF – Three sessions from the last three years collected on one CD-R from this Austin, TX Am Rep-styled quartet. Jagged rhythms, minor chords and "rah-rah" screamy vocals. I can't stand this stuff but I imagine many of you JESUS LIZARD fans might dig this. (MA) (21-song CD-R, lyrics not included, superthief.bandcamp.com)

VIVISEKTIO – *Totaalinen Kaamos 1984-1986* – A welcomed treat for fans of Finnish punk and hardcore from the '80s! VIVISEKTIO have released some blazing hardcore records the last several years, but here we have a cool time capsule from their early days. The lo-fi and primitive punk sounds from the practice room are a stark contrast to what fans are used to now, but I'm excited to hear the magic in the formative recordings of this small town punk band. In a scene (and world) dominated by men, VIVISEKTIO was one of the only femme-fronted bands in Finland (that I can think of), along with PYHÄKOULU of course. Comes with a small booklet and housed in a nifty cardboard tape mailer. (MA) (32-song cassette, lyrics included, vivisektio83@gmail.com)

THE WHOOPI STICKS – *We Are Spunk* – Wholly uninteresting presentation for a pretty solid punk disc. High energy, bouncy shits full of attitude, kinda like SHOWCASE SHOWDOWN meets KRUNCHIES. (WN) (5-song CD-R, lyrics not included, whoopisticks.bandcamp.com)

ZERO-FORM – Snotty and direct punk from Denver. Lightly distorted guitar slashings and the clearest vocals one could encounter from a punk band. Like, you can understand every word about fighting the patriarchy, abusive relationships, and keeping a watchful eye on shitty people. (MA) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, zero-form.bandcamp.com)

V/A – *Roboratten: Punk Sampler Berlin 2017* – Oh my god this is too much, like finding out lunch is catered at work and instead of one big meal you've got sixteen things you wanna try, but just a bite of each. Berlin is huge and I'm sure that there is plenty going on that isn't covered here, but this covers a lot of ground so it must be a good place to start. Sixteen bands twenty-five tracks…a weird split with PISSE getting three tracks and a few bands getting two. Most of the bands are new / current, but a few of the bands I assume have broken up, or just stopped releasing things a few years ago. Worth checking out. (AT) (25-song cassette, lyrics included, no contact info)

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ADULT DREAMS
free / 30 pgs

Adult Dreams is by far the best zine I have ever read that focuses on hardcore—especially hardcore in Australia. The writing is crisp and incisive, and also has a level of self-consciousness and humor that just comes from someone who is older and been through the shit and doesn't care as much. I was pretty drawn in by the story of Extortion and I got really into the epic drama of Lotus Fucker, Magrudergrind, and Toyota's Scion program. The reviews at the end were few in number but exhaustive.The writer of this zine loves hardcore. If you love hardcore, or want to read a good zine about hardcore, then get this zine. Highly recommended for those nights you are all tuckered out from doing windmills and being in the pit. (KS)
hardwareyouth@hotmail.com

COFFEETIMES #3
€2 / 42 pgs

A well-laid out zine that's chock full of slice-of-life interviews with powerviolence and associated genre bands such as Depraved, Sidetracked, Scum Humna, Gufonero, Strafplanet, Groak, En Negacion, and Lifes. Most bands also get asked about coffee or food, along with other "this or that" questions, which keeps things fun even if you don't know have a significant interest or musical frame of reference. Good record and show reviews at the end. (DG)
coffeetimes@gmx.de / facebook.com/xcoffeetimesx

DEEP FRIED ZINE MPLS #13
$1 / 24 pgs

My relationship to food is unromantic. I like bland shit, who cares? *Deep Fried Zine* is totally devoted to fast food. I hate foodie elitism but I get bored of goopy disgusting worship of all things gross. I get that it's important to not take yourself seriously all the time...but I don't want to become some pathological joke monster. Maybe. What I like about *Deep Fried* is it seems like it's just for fun. As far as I can tell there's no underlying artery-clogging agenda. One interesting plus: If I hadn't read *Deep Fried*, I wouldn't have discovered that Zima is back on the shelves. Everyone has a good story involving fast food, and I think this zine just wants to collectively laugh at those stories. The whole thing reads like a funny joke. One I don't necessarily feel like I have to hear more than once. (GJ)
2901 Yosemite Ave. S, St. Louis Park, MN 55416 / videophobia222@hotmail.com / facebook.com/deepfriedzinempls

DISCUSSED
free / 30 pgs

Sweet little punk art zine. You got your random t-shirt design, killer logos of questionable band names, Chaos in Tejas posters, CD covers, page filler, record store mock ups and...well, I think you get the picture. This person's art is definitely worth checking out if you want some punk / metal doodles to help drive home your product. I dig it, but it just looks like a quickly thrown together ad disguised as a zine. (DZ)
jasongeryan@gmail.com

FLŸORAZINE #2
free / 28 pgs

This zine is from Lexington, Kentucky, which I've been told is a shithole place to live. So I will encourage people to try to trade with the author of this zine, or write to them or something, since they don't want money for it. This person's zine is kinda all over the place. Most of the pages are in the right place, but one is just autobiographies of famous musicians that covered a whole page, so the reviews get clipped in the middle when the zine is folded in half, and appear on two way far-apart pages. As far as the zine itself, it is a classic zine. I get the feeling that the author who made this is on the younger side, based on the drawings and writing. They draw some comics, but could use a lot of improvement on their cartooning. The best drawings they have in there are anime-type drawings which they traced, one from yuri anime, which seems to be the center piece. There are a lot of images in the zine cut out of manga comics. The rest is what you usually see in zines: a lot of collage and writing. Mostly they choose a lot of quotes, but do have some pages just about their own thoughts and feelings. They let the quotes and images they collaged speak for them a lot otherwise. It didn't knock my socks off or anything, that being said, it is totally a zine, and only their second attempt, and they're not asking for a scandalous amount of money for it (or any at all even), so it's a little early to discourage them. Given their locale, and how the punk grapevine rates Lexington, Kentucky, sounds like they could really use to hear from some other punks in different places. I've been told this author is writing from prison, so they could probably could really use all the correspondence they can get. People in prison have a lot less to work with material-wise, so it kinda puts a different light on the level of accomplishment taken to put this zine together. (MR)
Kristopher Storey, 26731-018 FMC, P.O. Box 14500, Lexington, KY 40512

GENEVA13 #23
free / 59 pages

Geneva13 #23 is a zine about the community of Geneva, NY. And by "community" I don't mean the punk community, I mean just regular ol' normie community of people. This issue has interviews with retiring school teachers, the first person of color to be elected to city council, and a local citizen who is trans. There's also a bit on historic transitions

that have affected the city of Geneva (“transitions” is the theme of the whole issues). Frankly, it’s not a wildly exciting zine at all, but it was interesting to read about a small city that loves itself and records its own community in zine form. By no means is this at all a punk or radical zine. This is just people using the tools we punks use (like zines) to record their own history. I’m into it. (KS)
PO Box 13 Geneva, NY 14456 / mail@geneva13.com

HEADWINDS #1

£1.50 / 24 pgs

The inaugural issue of *Headwinds* goes in a lot of directions at once, not sticking to any particular one. This doesn’t mean it’s not entertaining. The England-based zine is clearly written by and for music lovers who have an unflinching commitment to local underground scenes. *Headwinds* is dense with different ideas, but it takes time to adjust to the author’s nostalgic, meandering voice. It also takes a minute to figure out what exactly is going on with each page. I get the sense that the author (who is never named...and this doesn’t seem to be intentional) has a lot to say but is not moved to edit. I can get down with incoherency but *Headwinds* feels a little sloppy. There’s a great interview with Emma from Yorkshire band Natterers. By far, she has the most interesting things to say in the whole zine, discussing native English bat species, electronics and democracy, dystopian futures, and her own path into hardcore punk. The comics are interesting, but mostly it’s nice to see drawings break up huge, wordy pages. Anyway, the author clearly has a lot of good material and ideas to work with, but hopefully will focus on making the next issue of *Headwinds* more readable and compelling to look at. (GJ)
10 Abbeyfield Close, Stockport, SK3 8EH UK / headwindszine@gmail.com

INFORMATION DOMINANCE #1

free / 36 pgs

New zine based out of Richmond, Virginia that focuses on “heavy music, art, culture, [and] politics” according to their subheader. The aim of the zine is to offer a load of information in a physical form instead of online. It is packed with content including: interviews with many talented male musicians including people in Exhumed, Fredag Den 13:e, and Left Cross; a guide to better concert photography; Vinyl Conflict’s “Best of 2016” list; some security culture tips; and best of all an interview with Margaret Rolicki, who discusses her work designing costumes and props for Gwar. The content of the zine is interesting and entertaining overall, and the layout is fairly strong. Certainly better than a lot of music zines out there. (JD)
informationdominancezine.com / jonah@tdbrecords.com

JUST SAY YO! #7

€3 / 48 pgs

This French zine (in English) pops up every couple of years with a new issue and is the work of occasional *MRR* contributor Nab (Nabil Ortega). It’s worth picking up for some well thought out zine and records reviews, as well as some more in-depth pieces on Workshed Records, Praise, Modern Love, and Seattle’s New Gods. A reprinting of a 1990 interview of Verbal Assault from a Dutch zine called *Lucky 13* is also an intriguing addition to this collection. (RH)
justsayyo.wordpress.com

MORE NOISE: THE VERY LAST OF ZINE

£5 / 36 pgs

If you couldn’t tell from the title, this “last” issue of *More Noise* focuses on ’80s Kyushu punk, in particular Swankys and Confuse. There are a plethora of interviews and articles in this zine, for the most part scanned from other sources, which are then cut and paste applied alongside a slew of images directly related to each band. The interviews and articles included here (often without citation) illustrate the wild world of mid-’80s Japanese punk with concert reports, studio antics, and personal stories (including *many* humorous moments). Despite the wide range of details included here (most, if not all of which are incredibly illuminating), this cobbled together zine is *not* the definitive text on either of these bands—please read the most recent *General Speech* instead for a thorough breakdown of Confuse’s career. *General Speech* also does without the misogynist advertising that the author of *More Noise* seems to enjoy. (JD)
slobodamburgher@gmail.com

MULADHARA

free / 60 pgs

Muladhara is a pretty mysterious Finnish “zen art” zine of black and white drawings by Jose Narvusi and Yin Yinase. There aren’t titles for the drawings, and there’s not really any information on the zine itself. Some of the art I am pretty into, like a couple pages of cool dense chaos and abstract word / image collages. But some of it is basically just a sketch of a desk chair. The zine is well crafted and nice to flip through. I’d be interested to see what these artists get up to next. In the meantime, though, my copy of *Muladhara* will likely wind up among the old hair ties and dust bunnies and half-read books under my bed. (GJ)
kerbala@wippies.com

NEW WAVE CHICKEN #4

$5 / 64 pgs

The first half of this zine is personal fiction about the author’s early childhood, that, to be honest, was not very inspiring. The rest fuckin’ ruled, though! Short little couple page stories on how the author discovered specific bands during their adolescence, I fuckin’ dug it. This is the kind of shit that makes me tick, and it’s done pretty well. I really enjoy learning how people found whatever fucked up road they are on. Apparently, other issues of this zine are more varied and include “interviews and stuff.” I would like to read more, but just not the fiction. The author seems to have had a pretty fucked up childhood, and the real shit seemed good enough for me. Definitely worth checking out. (DZ)
PO Box 880081, Pukalani, HI 96788

NYPD CHALLENGE COINS MEMBERS ONLY

free / 70 pgs

Trigger warning: everything. The premise of this piece is the NYPD’s club-within-a-club network of really fucked up cops doing really fucked up shit and then printing their exploits as points of pride onto coins they use to prove to their fucked up cop friends how fucked up they’ve been. Put out by the Research and Destroy offshoot of NYC’s Year0 project. Both projects have excellent archives on their websites. For fans of: not feeling sure that cops are evil. Let this guide wash over your uncertainty with some of the most egregious and brutally infamous episodes of the NYPD. This zine is very informative—it contains details of particular precincts and tons of history about the NYC communities that have been destroyed by the NYPD’s drug raids, violence against queer and trans people, housing crises and conflicts, and much more. Not recommended unless you have the psychic bandwidth for more of the same bullshit you already know about all cops. (ED)
researchdestroy.com

THE OPPOSITION

5 issues for €19.90 Germany or €22.90 World / 4 pgs

First issue of this ambitious-seeming “Market Letter for Record Traders” out of Germany, that may end up serving a similar demographic as the VLV messageboard. It’s a little odd to start things off with a piece

against manufactured collectibles when there's a Bridge Nine ad underneath and a write-up of American Nightmare a few pages later. Most of this issue's writing discusses the history and discography of Rock-O-Rama Records prior to (and explicitly prior to, at least for this issue) their getting mixed up with nazi politics in the mid-'80s. While the label history is almost entirely negative, and the owner is rightfully painted as an inept schmuck who couldn't count and treated his bands like garbage, I feel like discussing the merits of even their early catalog in the context of a label write-up is akin to discussing the merits of the first Skrewdriver record—it feels like revering an entity that does not deserve to be revered (also known as normalization). I guess they plan on going further in time with the label's discography next issue, which is straight up fencewalking as far as I'm concerned. (DG)
theopposhop.bigcartel.com

PLAINS #1
$10 / 16 pgs

"After the fire all that remains are ashes. Ashes of past memories, lives, better tomorrows," the photographer says. "Here I begin to spread my pequeñas cenizas." Publishing her work under the pseudonym "Pequeñas Cenizas" (which translates from Spanish to English as "Little Ashes"), photographer Bonnie Jean is part of the Paradise Archive Collective. Based in Los Angeles, the collective "are a women of color film / photography based zine coming into the scene to establish ourselves in these spaces. Hoping to showcase our work and letting people see what women can create," Bonnie Jean told DumDumZine.com in May 2017. Shooting in 35mm using a Minolta X-700 camera, she takes color photos of her friends, protests, and California desert landscapes. Bonnie Jean's photographic captures of the Women's March, Joshua Tree National Park, and more are displayed in her zine *Plains* Vol. 1. Bonnie Jean's work is anything but plain. (GM)
IG: @pequenascenizas

RAZORCAKE #100
$4 / 112 pgs

Razorcake has reached a milestone: 100 issues. "I can't claim to say this was all planned from the start," says Todd Taylor, executive editor / editor-in-chief, in the 100th issue. "At the same time, I'm not surprised. We work hard. We forge ahead." Emerging, like the mythical phoenix from the ashes of *Flipside* (RIP), *Razorcake* has forged ahead in its coverage of punk, DIY, and independent cultures since 2001. This is no small feat for any fanzine. So Taylor and *Razorcake* contributors have cause to celebrate. The 100th issue features an interview with Mike Watt (Minutemen, the Stooges, and myriad other bands), long-form interviews with Olympia, WA-based musician Erica Freas and thrash metal LA-based band Crom, "One Punk's Guide to Pynchon Novels," comics by Liz Prince and MariNaomi, and much more. "We do our part" is *Razorcake*'s motto. May *Razorcake* continue to do their part for 100 more issues. (GM)
razorcake.org

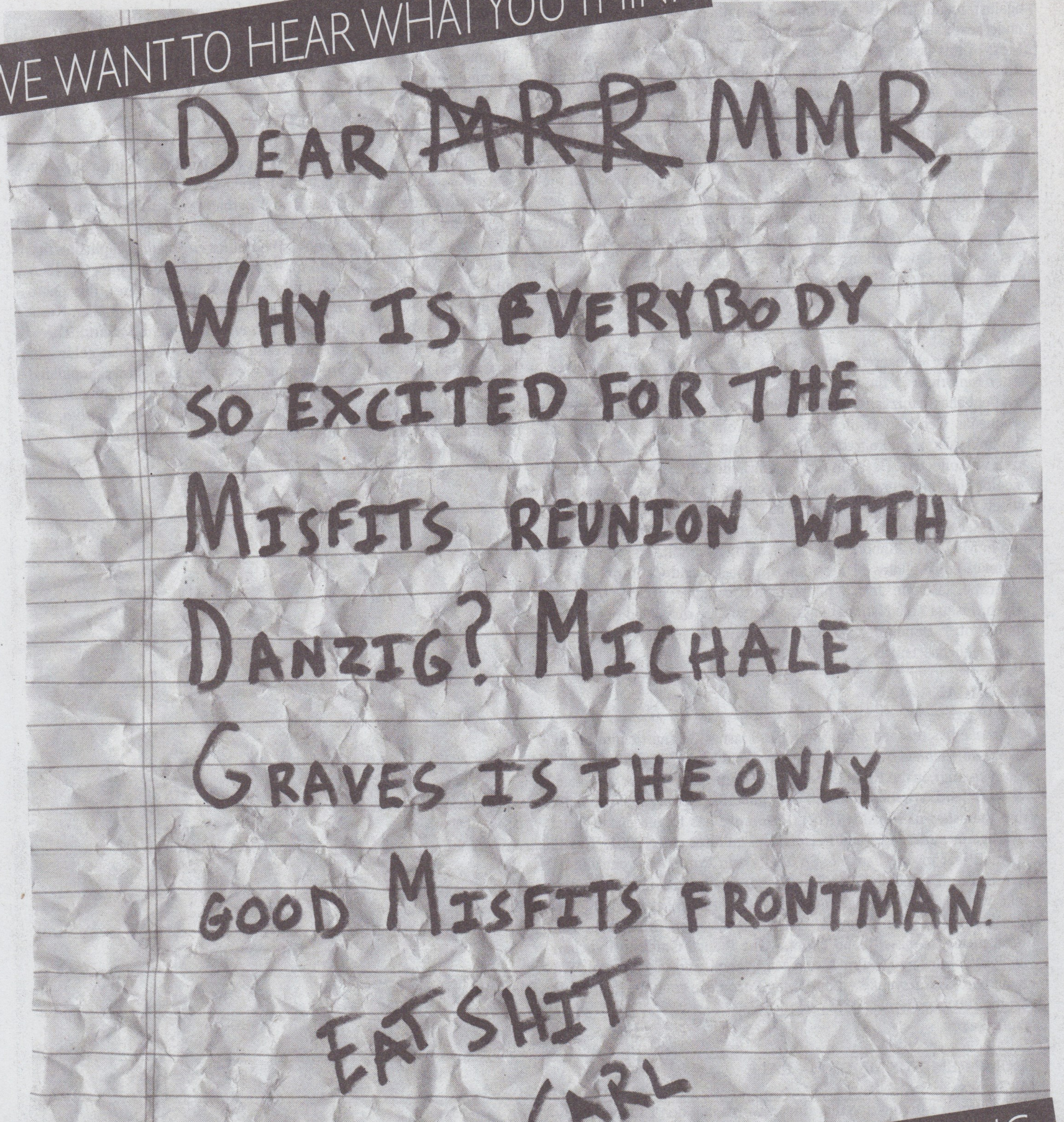
TRUMP REMINDS ME OF MY RAPE
$4 / 24 pgs

It's hard for me to describe this zine in words that don't sound totally insufficient. The author, Ifer Moore, has compiled her experiences of sexual assault into chronological "vignettes," each followed by a drawing of an everyday object she focused on to disassociate herself from what was happening. Disassociation, distance, silence, and confrontation are all explored here in such a stark, deep way that Moore's ideas have been on my mind almost every day. She was driven to share her memories when Trump was elected, as he represents a kind of apex of American culture's acceptance of sexual violence. What Moore has made is a vocal challenge to the blind eyes and silence that rape culture is met with. The zine is incredibly intense, and I recommend it. (GJ)
ifermoore@gmail.com / ifermoore.bigcartel.com/product/trump-reminds-me-of-my-rape

VENTANILLAS EN SAYULITA
$10 / 16 pgs

Remember the last time you were at an art gallery. With a slow but steady pace, you went from one framed work to another, pausing at each to admire the intricacies and perhaps read the accompanying description to learn more about that particular work and about the artist. A good photo zine, such as *Ventanillas en Sayulita*, replicates that gallery experience in print form. Roughly translated to "little windows in Sayulita" (I'm going on my classroom Spanish here), this photo zine offers views of street scenes in Mexico. The photographer, Kesia Luna, who is based in Los Angeles, traveled to Puerto Vallarta. There, she took photographs—in black and white as well as in color—of murals and other public art, architecture draped in shadows, populated avenues at dusk, and more. Through her specific lens as a woman of color photographer, we, the readers of *Ventanillas en Sayulita*, see Mexico as she sees it, in all its beauty and contrasts. (GM)
kesialphoto@gmail.com

WE WANT TO HEAR WHAT YOU THINK



DEAR ~~MRR~~ MMR,

WHY IS EVERYBODY SO EXCITED FOR THE MISFITS REUNION WITH DANZIG? MICHALE GRAVES IS THE ONLY GOOD MISFITS FRONTMAN.

EAT SHIT
-CARL

...EVEN IF YOU ARE WRONG

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PO BOX 460760
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Email us at
mrr@maximumrocknroll.com